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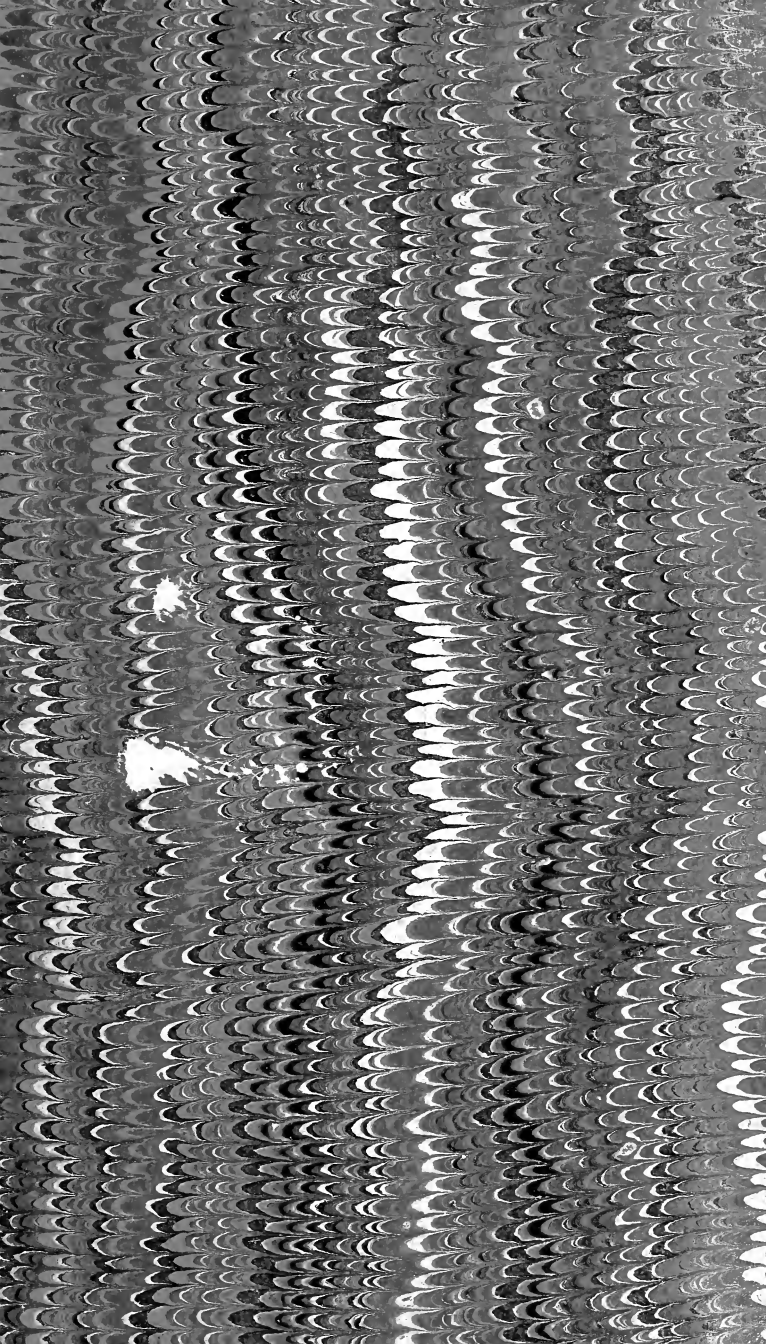
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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.











CONRAD, AND CO'S. EDITION OF 5

L I F E.

A C O M E D Y,

IN FIVE ACTS,

AS PERFORMED AT THE

NEW-THEATRE, PHILADELPHIA.

By FREDERICK REYNOLDS.

FIRST AMERICAN,
FROM THE SIXTH BRITISH EDITION.

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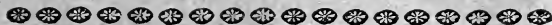


DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.



Sir Harry Torpid,		<i>Messrs.</i> BERNARD.
Gabriel Lackbrain,	-	BLISSET.
Primitive,	- - -	WARREN.
Marchmont,	- - -	FULLERTON.
Craftly,	- - -	FRANCIS.
Clifford,	- - -	JONES.
Waiter,	- - -	MILBOURNE.
William,	- - -	DURANG.
Jenkins,	- - -	PRIGMORE,
Jonathan,	- - -	USHER.
James,	- - -	HAMMOND.
Servant,	-	<i>Master</i> LYNCH.
Mrs. Belford,	-	<i>Mrs.</i> SHAW.
Rofa,	- -	<i>Miss</i> WESTRAY.
Mrs. Decoy,	-	<i>Mrs.</i> OLDMIXON.
Betty,	- -	<i>Mrs.</i> LYNCH.

SCENE—*A Sea-Port Town, and the Neighbourhood.*



PROLOGUE.

WRITTEN BY A FRIEND.



NATURE's a worn-out coat—her comic vein
Bards following bards have turn'd and turn'd again—
Can you expect it as bran new—as when
'Twas first cut out by Shakspeare and old Ben ?
They had in aid of their superior art,
The nap of novelty on every part.
Would we a braggart paint, absurd and vain,
We can but dress up Pistol o'er again ;
And change, like variations to old tunes,
His old flash'd breeches into pantaloons ;
Or would we restless jealousy attack,
Kately's turn'd coat must fit a modern back.
Will you not therefore spare us, who tho' loth,
Must cut our coat according to our cloth.
Full fifteen years has your responsive smile
And cheering roar repaid our author's toil.
Think what laborious pangs, what loss of rest
To furnish out an annual crop of jest—
“ If jest it can be call'd, which jest is none,”
Till your kind hands its dubious merits own.
But should, perchance, one year of dreary dearth
To dullness turn our author's wish'd for mirth ;
Tho' now condemn'd by your impartial laws,
His grateful homage own your past applause.

L I F E.

ACT I.

SCENE—*Outside of CRAFTLY'S Library ;
View of the Town, the Sea, &c.*

*Enter MARCHMONT (with a Manuscript in his
Hand) and ROSA.*

ROSA.

CHEER up, cheer up, my father! surely this should be a day of joy.

March. It should ; but 'twill not be ; I have out-toiled my strength.

Rosa. You have. For ten long years the produce of your pen has been our sole support ; and for these six months past the labour of the brain has been unceasing ; night after night has been devoted to that one composition (*pointing to the manuscript in Marchmont's hand*). But now the book is finished, and yonder lives the gentleman who by the purchase of it will recompense you amply. Look, there's the library ; will not that revive you, father?

March. It will ; for thence will come forth gold ; and, oh ! my child, you know too well how much we stand in need of it.

Rosa. I do indeed ; and, if I dare advise, out of the little profit that produces, store up a part, my father.

March. No ; 'tis already disposed of—all devoted, and to the best of purposes—to make you happy, Rosa ; to place you far above the frowns of fortune. There (*giving her a newspaper*), read ; read that advertisement ; 'tis of my inserting.

Rosa. (*reading*). “ Wanted, as a teacher to a young person of the age of sixteen, “ a lady who will instruct her in music and “ drawing, on moderate terms. Apply at “ the Priory, near Ashdown.”—How ! this for me, my father ?

March. Yes ; 'tis for you I have encountered such unusual toil. Think not that vanity's my motive : but consider, child, my health's precarious ; and when I am gone, what will become of thee ?

Rosa. O ! cease, Sir, cease to talk thus.

March. Nay, we are now prepared : for mistress once of these fine arts, you may insure a livelihood by instructing others : as tutoress, you may procure an honest, ample income ; and your father—yes, my Rosa, death will lose half its terrors at recollection that my child's provided for.

Rosa. Death !—oh ! in pity, Sir—I can't exist without you—what, what will money yield me ?—remember, when I've lost you, I am bereft of all that's dear to me on earth—I have no mother to—

March. Mother !—have a care !—have I not charged you on your life never to breathe that deadly, harrowing word ?

Rosa. You have; but the occasion called it forth; but 'tis indeed most hard that I'm to know no more, than that she's in her grave. O! let me once again entreat you to impart her history; give me each circumstance; or, if you will not tell me how she lived, inform me how she died.

March. (*sternly.*) Well then, she died of a broken heart.

Rosa. What! she was wronged?

March. She was; by a villain, a most abandoned villain.

Rosa. Oh! may Heaven pour down its choicest vengeance—

March. (*laying hold of her hand.*) Hold! his punishment is equal to his crimes—'tis in his head! his heart!—it gnaws, it maddens, it consumes him!—Fear not, my girl, I—I can answer for his sufferings; hell knows no torments like them.

Rosa. What! you avenged her wrong?—noble, virtuous man!

March. Virtuous!—death and shame!—Hear me, Rosa; hitherto I have commanded silence on this subject, now I implore it; if you've one spark of pity for your distracted father, never, never, name your mother. Virtuous!—oh? my child (*weeps and lays his head on her neck.*)

Rosa. Well, well, compose yourself: from this hour depend upon my silence.

Enter CRAFTLY and JENKINS, from the Library.

Craft. Come along, Jenkins; come from the crowd in the library, and I'll tell you such a secret.—Heh! that scribbler Marchmont; what brings him here?

March. Mr. Craftly, may I entreat a word with you?—I must inform you, Sir, that hitherto I have maintained myself and this unequalled child, by what my publications have produced from men of your profession in the capital.

Craft. Well, Sir, and what's this to me?

March. You shall hear, Sir. This day I have completed a new work, which, from the nature and locality of the subject, I offer first to you. It is a Satire on Extortioners; and is intended to expose that selfish, ravenous set, who, pirate-like, plunder each stranger that frequents our coast.

Craft. And you want me to buy it?—ha! ha!—Do you hear him, Jenkins? he supposes I deal in books.

March. Why, don't you keep a library, Sir?

Craft. To be sure I do; but there's every thing going forward in it but reading. Look, take a peep at them. One half of the company, you see, are making love, or talking scandal; and the other buying trinkets, or shaking the dice-box. Books indeed! why one would be enough for your frequenters of a watering-place; first, because most of them

never read at all ; secondly, because I doubt whether many of them can read ; and thirdly, because those who do, so soon forget every line of the author, that one volume is a library to them.

March. Nay, Sir, but when you reflect on the tendency of the production—

Craft. Psha ; hang the tendency : write a pægyric on the glorious art of raffling, and then perhaps I'll talk to you. See ! see how the flats bite !—all pulling out their cash, all putting down their names :—that's the manuscript, that's the real productive writing ; and I'll bet, I get more by my evening raffles than ever booksellers got by Milton or Shakspeare. Besides, you are alive : if you want your book to sell, you should shoot yourself. An author never lives till he dies. So, to London—send your work back to London.

March. I will ; for there (thank Heaven !) a library is still the seat of study and of learning, and never was yet prostituted to gaming and chicanery.—Come, Rosa, let us return to the Priory.

Craft. Take care, Sir ; remember that Priory belongs to my ward Gabriel ; that the rent is small, in consideration of its ruinous state ; recollect there are arrears.

March. I know ; but he's too liberal—

Craft. He ! what has he to do with it ? don't I turn him round my finger ? So be on your guard, Sir ; and instead of satirizing extortioners, extol raffling.

March. Never, Sir ; for though my toil's incessant, and my gains small, I will not profit by corrupting morals ; and I would rather

welcome beggary or famine, than pen a line to injure virtue, or degrade myself. Come, my child ; we've been perhaps too sanguine ; but we will not despair.

[*Exit with ROSA.*]

Craft. Insolent gazeteer!—but I'll humble him ; yes, yes, I've already laid a train for him.—And now for the secret ; what new master-stroke do you think this clever little octavo (*pointing to his head*) has atchieved this morning ? Mrs. Decoy, a widow of family and fashion, first cousin to a baronet of ten thousand a year, has consented to marry Gabriel.

Jenk. What, your ward ?

Craft. Aye : Mr Primitive, his rich uncle in Jamaica, desired me to select a wife for him, and I've done it : the widow has consented, and Gabriel is at this moment paying his first addresses to her.

Jenk. Impossible : a woman of family and expectations marry such a rustic !

Craft. That's it—that's the very reason. She says she is tired of town life, and town lovers ; and therefore selects Gabriel for his rural simplicity. But I don't care about the motive : she's to give me twelve hundred pounds for my consent, and a third of what Mr. Primitive settles on her into the bargain ; now that's what I call a good morning's raffle.

Gabr. (without.) “ Come, let us dance and sing—”

Craft. He comes, the enamoured swain appears. Now we shall hear how the courtship went on.

Enter Gabriel, singing.

Gabr. " While all the village bells shall ring—It's a match, guardy !—the great lady consents : I'm a great man, you're another, and you shall be another Jenkins.

Craft. Bravo ! excellent !—What, and you like the thoughts of matrimony now ?

Gabr. Hugely.—I thought at first it would lead to wrangling and quarrelling ; but—he ! he ! he ! —I find that's all a mistake ; for the moment we are united, that moment we are divided.

Craft. Divided !

Gabr. Yes : a husband mustn't sit next to his wife at table, nor hand her out of a room, nor dance with her. In short, he mustn't be seen with her :—" So," says she, " we can't quarrel if we don't meet, you know."—" No," says I ; " and, at that rate, if a man wishes never to see a woman, " ecod ! he can't do better than marry her ; so, send for the parson, become Mrs. Gabriel Lackbrain ; and " then, you know, I bid you good-bye for life."

Craft. Well, and what did she say then ?

Gabr. Why, she laughed, and talked of her accomplishments ; reminded me of her finished education, and spoke a good deal of one Meters and one Tasio.

Craft. Psha ! it's the same person—Metas-tasio.—Dolt ! blockhead !

Gab. Blockhead ! how could I help it ? didn't you bring me up among the mountains ? And

so I told her—says I—“ I know nothing of either of these Roman warriors, and I don’t see why I should : Latin won’t teach me to sow barley, or Greek to fatten a pig.”—Says I, “ I’m no foreigner ; I can write and read my native language ; and I wish, with all my soul, your great scholars could say the same.”

Craft. You did, did you ?—then she laughed again, I suppose ?

Gabr. She did consumedly. But to conclude, she told me, though she preferred the country, I might visit London ; and that her cousin the rich baronet, would introduce me to all the first circles. This, you may be sure, won my heart ; for I had always a buckish turn, you know. So we struck the match ; she sent for the Clergyman—

Craft. Sent for the Clergyman !—We’ll go directly, and, by way of settlement, read the letter of Mr. Primitive. Odsheart ! she’s the very woman he’d select ; so disgusted with London ! so devoted to the country !—Oh ! she’ll have a thousand charms for him ;—and what’s better, she’ll have more than twelve hundred for me (*aside.*)—So, come, you rogue, come and be married.

Gabr. Aye, the sooner the merrier, I say ; for I do so long to see the baronet, and visit London : and when I get there, dang it, how I’ll astonish these cocknies ! I know they look upon us countrymen as a parcel of comeys and doeyes, that can only clap our hands upon our hearts and talk of conscience, innocence, and nature : but they shan’t wrong us in that manner ; they shan’t suppose us so much behindhand ; for I’ll convince them

there's more love-making in our woods than in their squares; more drinking in our ale-houses than in their taverns; and for speculating, and shaking a dice-box, you can satisfy them about that you know, guardy.—But now for the great lady.—“Come let us dance and sing, &c.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE—*A room in the Hotel.*

Enter CLIFFORD and WAITER.

Clif. You're sure there's no such person just arrived?

Wait. I'm sure there's no lady in the house of that description: but if such a one should arrive you may depend on the earliest intelligence from the best of waiters in the best of hotels in the best of watering places.

Clif. That's right; and here's an earnest of my future bounty (*giving him money*). Be wary now, for my existence depends upon recovering her. I came from London in pursuit of her, and she certainly took this very road. But, in the mean time, lay the cloth in the dining-room (*opens door in back scene*). Why, here's company.—(*SIR HARRY TORPID discovered sitting in a chair, with a newspaper in his hand, fast asleep. A table close to him, with wine and glasses on it.*)

Wait. No Sir, the gentleman's just going. He came here about two hours ago, intending to enjoy our sea breezes for a fortnight; but,

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as usual, he is already tired, and will be off again in a moment.

Clif. Indeed!—Why, 'tis Sir Harry Torpid.

Wait. It is, Sir: and between ourselves, I fancy he is a little tired of himself, for he bribes the post-boys to drive like madmen till he gets to a place; and, when there, behold how it ends!—in snooring over a newspaper, whilst the same boys are preparing to drive him equally fast back again.

Clif. Yes, I've known him long; and the cause of all this is, his having nothing to do.—But he wakes; I'll talk to him; leave us.

[Exit WAITER.]

Sir H. (*Yawning and stretching out his arms*) Aw! aw!—still in this infernal place! still alone! still—(*rises*)—Damme! I'll be off. I'll try Tunbridge again: to be sure I've been there already twice this summer: however, any where but where I am. Here, waiter, a chaise and four again.

Clif. What, Sir Harry, have you forgotten—

Sir H. What, Jack! Jack Clifford!—my dear fellow, you've just come in time; I was reduced to the last extremity; had taken my after-dinner snooze, read the advertisements twice over; and, except paying the bill and wrangling with the waiter, had'nt a single hope on earth.—But now! sit down and finish the bottle, my boy.

Clif. Why, you're a strange creature, Sir Harry! but yesterday I saw you in Pall Mall.

Sir H. Yes, and very likely there you may see me again to-morrow. I'm sick to death of these sea-port towns. One goes to the libraries, the card-rooms, and the tea-rooms;

and nothing interests, nobody seems alive.— Upon my soul, Jack, if these sea cormorants didn't continually compel me to put my hands in my pockets, I should'nt know that I was alive myself. But you, what is your pursuit here ?

Clif. The most tormenting one in the world—love, Sir Harry.

Sir H. Love ! Oh, how I envy you ! what would I give to be in love !

Clif. Don't, don't think of it ; it has made me miserable.

Sir H. So much the better : that's what I want : and if I could but work myself into a most unhappy passion—no matter with whom—were she ever so ugly or ill-tempered, it would still answer my purpose.

Clif. What ! would a scolding wife answer your purpose ?

Sir H. To be sure : instead of sitting alone in a coffee-room, picking my teeth, or yawning over a newspaper ; think of having a fine, active, cheerful companion, who will scowl at me, snarl at me, and set my whole soul in a delicious ferment !—then, Jack, after an hour of delightful quarrelling, what say you to the reconciliation, to the kissing and making up again ?—And, to complete the charming fire-side, call to mind half a dozen little Sir Harries ; think of their noise, their nursing, their expence.—Oh ! all this must produce agitation ? and, were I as miserable as you are, I should be the happiest dog in England.

Clif. Psha ! you know not what you talk of. Do you call it happiness to lose the object you are attached to ?

Sir H. Lose her!

Clif. Yes, that is my case. My aunt, Mrs. Clifford, lately brought with her from Switzerland a lady of the name of Belford. At first sight I loved her; but on declaring my affection, she treated me with scorn: however, I persisted; and, aided by my aunt's entreaties, hoped for success; when suddenly she left the house, and fled I know not whither.

Sir H. What, and you pursued her?

Clif. Yes; but hitherto in vain; cursed chance! I can gain no tidings of her.

Sir H. All the better again: the pursuit, my boy, the pursuit is every thing; and I only wish somebody would run away from me.

Clif. 'Sdeath! this trifling is ridiculous: were I as weary of myself, would I not seek out some employment?

Sir H. I have; I have tried every thing; devoted half my life, and nearly all my fortune, to racing, hunting, drinking, gaming, volunteering; in short, at the age of thirty, I've so outlived every enjoyment, that if I can't contrive to fall desperately in love, that I may run after somebody—to be sure, there's one other prospect—my creditors grow so pressing, that probably I shall have to run away from somebody; and then, you know, I'm comfortable; for, next to love, certainly debt is most likely to keep a man in hot water.

Enter WILLIAM.

Clif. Well, Sir, have you been more fortunate than your master! have you any news of the runaway?

Will. Yes, Sir; a lady answering Mrs. Belford's description, was seen this morning at a farm-house about eight miles off.

Clif. Indeed!—my hopes revive, and she shall answer for her haughty conduct. Come, shew me the way.

Sir H. What, will you leave me alone, Jack?

Clif. You! why I thought you were going to Tunbridge.

Sir H. Yes; but I'd rather go with you. It will be luxury to the solitude of a post-chaise; and, besides, who knows but this is the very woman I'm to fall in love with.

Clif. Have a care, Sir; cross me in my passion, and—

Sir H. You'll blow my brains out?—There I defy you; for, if I thought I had any, I should have done them that honour many years ago. But come now, a friend may be useful; you may want his advice, his assistance.

Clif. Well, I don't like to part with you; so allons.

Sir H. Allons: and now I start fair again. —But hold, hold—all right and honourable, I hope?—One had better do nothing, than do badly: and, to fight against time, a man

must sleep of nights—aye, and of days too : so remember, Jack, you found me sleeping ; and don't, by drawing me into a bad action, deprive me of the best friend I have in the world.

[*Exeunt.*]

S C E N E—*A room at Mrs. DECOY's.*

Enter Mrs. DECOY. and BETTY.

Mrs. D. Ha ! ha ! the day's our own :—they're snared, they're caught ; and your ruin'd mistress will once more roll in wealth and splendour.

Betty. She will, Madam ; and all owing to your coming to this town on a matrimonial speculation.

Mrs. D. Matrimonial speculation indeed, Betty !—Yes, when a run of luck had reduced me to the last shilling, didn't I tell you I would go to a watering place, and save myself by catching a golden calf ?—And I've succeeded ; and how !—simply, by telling Mr. Craftly I was heiress to a rich baronet ; devoted to retirement ; and would give him twelve hundred pounds, and a third of what's settled on me, merely for his trouble in consenting.

Betty. I know. But are you sure of your husband's wealth.

Mrs. D. Oh, there you may trust me. His uncle, now in Jamaica, lately changed

his name to Primitive, for a fortune of two hundred thousand pounds ; and, in consequence of his daughter's death, adopted his nephew Gabriel, and appointed Mr. Craftly his guardian—and a rare guardian he is ! While he is nightly picking up a few pounds at his library, here have I, at one throw, raffled myself into a provision for life.

Betty. You have, Ma'am ; and I'm sure Mr. Gabriel's a lucky man.

Mrs. D. That's more than I know : he's but the husband of necessity : my cousin, my dear Sir Harry Torpid is the object of my choice.—But silence ! here are the two Gabies : I must support my character.

Enter CRAFTLY and GABRIEL.

Craft. (*bowing all respect, &c.*) Madam, my ward has told me of your condescension ; and though you laughed at him about Meters and Tasio—

Gabr. Laughed at me ! Lord help you ! why Mrs. Decoy isn't singular there ; and, if it wouldn't make her jealous, I could tell her that all the women do the same :—yes, other young bucks may boast that the dear creatures smile upon them ; but, icod ! I never look them in the face that they an't in an absolute roar, he ! he !

Craft. True ; Gaby's an eternal source of good humour. And now, if you've nothing further to propose—

Mrs. D. Nothing, Sir; only, to prevent the possibility of any misunderstanding. I hope, Mr. Gabriel has no objections to separate servants, separate incomes,—in short, a separate establishment?

Gabr. None at all, Ma'am: if you wish it, I'll sign articles of separation first, and marry you afterwards; I will, with all my heart and soul; that is, if Guardy approves, for I always obey him.

Craft. Good boy! and this marriage is a reward for your obedience. But now to read Mr. Primitive's letter, in lieu of settlement. Listen, for 'tis most important.—(*reads*) “ Dear cousin Craftly, Although I disapprove of early marriages, (having in the person of my unfortunate daughter seen the fatal effects of them,) yet as I intend shortly to return to England, I beg you will select for Gabriel a wife of a quiet retired disposition; and if, after residing with them at the cottage one twelvemonth, I approve of their conduct, I hereby pledge myself to settle on them two thousand a year during my life, and the bulk of my fortune after my decease.”

Gabr. Bravo, nunky! Dang it, we shall be up to our chins in clover, Ma'am.

Craft. Stop; here's an awful proviso.—(*reads*) “ But if, on the contrary, I find them unworthy my esteem, I shall not only revoke this promise, but consider myself at liberty to adopt whoever I think proper.”

Paul Primitive.”

Gabr. That awful! rot it, it's main hard if we can't keep worthy for a twelvemonth. Besides, who else is he to adopt?

Craft. Who! why, the child of this unfortunate daughter he speaks of. Though he deserted her in consequence of her marrying Marchmont, he was still doatingly fond of her; and if Rosa should throw herself in her grandfather's way—

Mrs. D. True; the sight of her might revive sensations—

Craft. Never fear; I've been aware of all that; and Marchmont and his daughter shall be kept out of the way. There are arrears of rent—and neither of them shall see Mr. Primitive.—Mum!

Enter a SERVANT.

Serv. Madam, the clergyman is this moment arrived.

Mrs. D. The clergyman! Lord! I'm so embarrassed:—ar'n't you, Mr. Gabriel?

Gabr. Why, I do feel somewhat flurried; but it's because I'm not used to it; if I was like you, I should not mind it. Lord bless you, I shall be quite bold and comfortable the next time I marry. But come, first for the ceremony, then for the cottage.

Mrs. D. Ay, then for the cottage; and when we get there, I hope Mr. Craftly will recollect that we shall want several new and additional articles of furniture.

Craft. I know; and, as it will give me a consequence in the town, I beg you'll so far indulge me, that whatever either of you want I may bespeak of my own tradesmen in my own name.

Gabr. Icod, we'll indulge you ; and to begin, bespeak us a set of high horses and low carriages.

Mrs. D. Ay ; a dashing curricie, and a gay sociable.

Gabr. No, not that ; because, if we've a separate establishment, any thing sociable will knock all up, you know. No, if we must travel together, we'll have such a carriage as Mr. and Mrs. Jar have—a wide post-chaise, with a fine thick partition between us ; that's the way to prevent wrangling. But now for it ; now for the clergyman ; and then, Gaby, receive the reward of thy youth, thy beauty, and thy accomplished manners.

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

A C T II.

SCENE—*Outside of the Priory; distant view of the Sea; Garden Chair.*

Enter CLIFFORD and SIR HARRY TORPID, hastily.

Clif. Well, but I insist—listen—hear me, Sir Harry.

Sir H. I tell you I'm not Sir Harry—I'm another person—new born—just come into the world; and till this moment, never was alive.

Clif. Nay, but what has occasioned it? is it because you've found the object I'm in search of?

Sir H. No; 'tis because I've found the object I'm in search of—the thing I've been looking for all my life—a woman—a lovely, agitating, tormenting woman. My dear fellow, give me joy; I'm as miserable as yourself.

Clif. Psha! I almost wish you were.

Sir H. Why I am—I tell you I am. But you shall hear whence my good fortune arose. After we had searched in vain for your runaway, I went to Craftley's library; and, as usual, was sitting in that listless, lifeless state, when yawning fill'd each pause the tooth-pick

left; when (lucky chance!) I was awakened from my torpor by the voice of a distressed female: I looked up, and saw the most divine, fascinating, attracting little angel! tears were starting from her eyes; and, with supplicating hands, she was entreating that rascal Craftley not to send her father to prison.

Clif. What! and you became interested for her?

Sir H. Yes: how could I help it? She told him, he was a poor author; wrote for his bread; and if he arrested him for the rent he owed, in his present infirm state, he must perish. At this, my heart, which had hitherto been a sleeping partner, began bounding about like a tennis-ball; and at the same moment, before she could raise her handkerchief to her eyes, one of her tears fell on my hand: I looked at it, and soon saw another—it was my own! the first I had ever shed. I hailed the sight; and only cursed my unlucky stars, I had never before known the luxury of weeping.

Clif. Why, heyday! this is indeed a transformation!—And did you speak to her?

Sir H. I did; and to that savage Craftly; but he was inexorable. On which, I fairly told her, I had nothing to do; my time was entirely on my hands; and if she'd give me leave, I'd horsewhip him through the world. To this she objected; and not daring to offer her money—and indeed the sum I had in this little gentleman (*producing a pocket book*) being too insignificant to be useful—she went away hopeless and disconsolate. I instantly inquired all about her; and there she lives, and

here I'll live; and let her treat me with indifference, I shall still be grateful.

Clif. What! if she don't return your passion?

Sir H. To be sure. She has made me a most unhappy, agitated being; and that's conferring an obligation I never can repay.

Clif. Psha! I'll leave you to indulge your folly. And now, mark the difference between us: I have resources within myself; and if I fail in obtaining the object I'm in search of, I shall fly to solitude for consolation.

Sir H. Don't Jack, don't think of it; I've tried it.

Clif. You tried solitude!

Sir H. Yes; it won't do at all. For once, when I found nothing else would answer, I went alone to a remote part of the Isle of Wight, hired a sort of hermitage, let my beard grow, and determined to dig my own grave, and howl if any body came near me. Well, I couldn't dress my meat, or make my bed, you know; so I was obliged to hire a kind of a laundress; and though she was both old and ugly, so tired was I of myself, that the sound of her feet was music to me, the sight of her face transporting to me, and her conversation—Oh! I used to listen to her infernal nonsense with such rapture!—Ah! Jack, Jack, you may talk of Petrarch and other anchorets living alone; but it's all an imposition; they never got on without a Laura, or some other snug thing in their hermitages, you may depend on't.

Clif. Well, you're incurable; so adieu.

C

When I want you, I shall know where to find you.

Sir H. You will; for here I sit for life (*sitting in garden chair*). *Exit CLIFFORD.* And, thank Heaven! now I can sit still a little; for hitherto I have been so confounded fidgetty, that, except when sleeping, I could never bring myself to an anchor for two minutes together.—Gad! I wonder whether she's got home: I suppose not; for I made so much haste from the library.—(*Rises, and gets behind a tree.*) No, she comes! the lovely, agonizing angel comes!

Enter ROSA.

Rosa. My poor father! how shall I tell him that the interview has failed; that the unfeeling man rejects my supplications, and the reward of all his labours is a prison? Alas! I dread to impart it.

Sir H. (*advancing and bowing.*) Then let me do it for you, Ma'am.

Rosa. The gentleman who was so kind to me at the library!

Sir H. Yes, Ma'am; and who from this hour begs to be employed by you; who will go to London for letters for you, to India for muslins for you, to the north pole for furs for you.

Rosa. Sir, you're very good; but I cannot think of troubling—

Sir H. I like trouble, Ma'am; and if your father want assistance, if he want an aman-

uensis—to be sure I can't give him thoughts or jokes—but I'll copy for him till I'm as black in the face as his own ink, Ma'am.

Rosa. Sir, this kindness from a stranger, from one on whom we have no claim—

Sir H. You have the strongest claim, you gave me life, Ma'am ; you found me in a state of apathy, inanity ; but now ! think of my enviable situation ; instead of coffee-rooms club-rooms, and card-rooms, I shall live in the open air, kneel all night under your window, and rend the sky with my despair and rapture !

Rosa. How ? what mean you ?

Sir H. Mean ! that, doating as I do, I shall love every thing around you ; reverence the woods that shade you, worship the winds that blow upon you, and idolize the little lap-dog that barks at you.

Rosa. Sir, I don't exactly understand you :—but my father expects me—good day.

Sir H. What ! you cast me from you ?—Well, no matter ; you've done my business, and I'm equally obliged to you.

Rosa. Sir, the obligation is on my part : the interest you have shewn for a most unhappy parent deserves my warmest gratitude ; and though, from our different situations, it is too probable we may never meet again, yet be assured, Sir, I shall often think of him, who, in the hour of affliction mingled his tears with mine. Farewell, Sir. [Exit.

Sir H. (taking out his handkerchief, and weeping.) Farewell ! Farewell !—I'm choaked with grief, and yet never was so happy in all my life.—But what shall I do ? how employ

myself to serve her?—Suppose I try to pay her father's debts?—Well, no bad beginning. But how? I've only these few notes (*taking out a small pocket-book*); and if I offer them, it may perhaps offend.—Distress—suppose—I have it—she's returning, she's coming this way; I'll drop it purposely that she may find it. My friend (*to the pocket-book*); I filled you to lay out in pleasure; half's already gone in taverns and in travelling, and you've procured me not one atom; but if the other half snatches a needy author from a prison, you will have done your duty nobly—yes, that will indeed give pleasure. But she comes—(*drops the book*): I'll to the woods, and give a loose to sighs and tears, and happiness unequalled. [Exit.

Re-enter ROSA.

Rosa. Not there! my father not in the Priory!—where, where, can he have gone? Surely they hav'n't already—(*treads on pocket-book*)—What's this?—a pocket-book, and open, and bank notes!—Heavens! how came it here?—Oh! no doubt it belongs to the stranger; he has lost it; dropt it by accident; and perhaps already feels distress from wanting it. Where shall I find him? for, after what has passed, it would be gratifying to make even this small return. Ha! he comes—no, 'tis my father—and in such haste! and looking so disordered!—

Enter MARCHMONT, hastily.

Speak, speak, Sir!—what has happened?

March. So—I have outrun—escaped them—Oh! (*faint and overcome.*)

Rosa. Merciful powers! how pale, how wan you look!

March. I have cause: for, even now, waiting in yonder path for your return, two men approached, and seized me. They said, I was their prisoner, and for rent due from the Priory; and, what is most perplexing and mysterious, they offered instant freedom, provided I would sail with you to some far-distant land. This staggered and enraged me; I struggled with them, and, in the conflict, I escaped. But, oh! my child, my feeble frame, already worn with labour and with sorrow—your hand, your hand, sweet girl.

Rosa. (*leading him towards the chair.*) Oh! is there no way to satisfy these most unfeeling men? the debt is but a trifle.

March. No; but, poor and friendless as I am, tis more than—soft!—assist me—I can go no further (*falls into the garden chair.*)

Rosa. And must I see you perish?—Oh, my father! live, for my sake live! Consider now our hopes are vanished, and I left alone, no friend, no mother—Oh! pardon! pardon! I forgot, I forgot.

March. (*wildly.*) No mother, said you?—and why, why, at this moment, is she not here to succour and console you?—But she's

revenged; for could she see me thus reduced, thus on the eve of being torn from the sole pledge of our affection—

Rosa. (flying into his arms). You shall not; we will fall together.—(Turns from him). Heavens! when money could restore him, is there no mode?—no.—Ha! what have I here? (looking at the pocket-book, which has been all the time in her hand.) Enough; more than sufficient for the purpose.—Blessed fight?

—I can save him (going hastily towards MARCHMONT).—And yet—(pauses and recollects)—what am I doing? this money is another's; and I must not—Oh! no, I dare not touch it.

March. Hark! they are coming!—Rosa, raise me; help, help me to avoid them. (She tries to raise him, he falls back in the chair.)—No, it will not be; I am their victim.

Rosa. (kneeling.) Oh! Thou who watchest over trembling innocence! instruct, direct me.—There, is a parent perishing from sickness and distress; here, is the remedy to save him. Am I, his child, to see him suffer on; or am I, by dishonest means, to snatch him from the grave!—(MARCHMONT sighs, she flies to him.) My father, speak—speak to me, my father!

March. I do, I do.—(Takes her hand.) Ha! what agitates you? what makes you tremble thus?

Rosa. Guilt, father, guilt. I have the power to preserve you—look, here is the money—but it is not mine, father, it is not mine.

March. Not yours!

Rosa. No; I found it—nay, worse, I know

whom it belongs to. Pity me—spare me—I could with joy lay down my life to serve you; but I cannot—no, not e'en to save a father, can I descend to actions robber-like and base.

March. What! this is your resolution?
(*rises.*)

Rosa. It is; and do not blame me, Sir; I act but from the lesson you have taught me. You bade me die, rather than live dishonoured; and I've to thank you for the precept; for though the sure result be fatal to us both, something within assures me I am right; and that the father will applaud the child who welcomes death in preference to dishonour.

March. (*runs and embraces her.*) Come to my arms—you have revived, restored me! Now I can meet imprisonment, or death; my daughter's virtue will atone for all.

Rosa. You can forgive me then?

March. More—I can worship you! and since returning strength invigorates my frame, let us not sink beneath misfortune.—

Enter SIR HARRY TORPID behind.

No, though the agent is our foe, the principal may still befriend us. What say you, Rosa, shall we go instantly and apply to Mr. Lack-brain?

Rosa. Most willingly: but, alas! he's guided by his guardian.

March. True; but he oft has served me, I am his debtor for more than rent. Come, come, let us not despond.—(*As they are going*)—

SIR HARRY *advances.*

Sir H. Sir, I beg pardon; I hope I don't intrude; but, as you seem somewhat fatigued and unwell, suppose you let me apply to this Mr. Whats-his-name: upon my soul I've nothing better to do.

March. Sir!

Rosa. It is the gentleman who dropt the pocket-book, and I'm most happy to restore it. Sir, on my return I found this—

Sir H. It's not mine, Ma'am; by all that's serious, it's not mine.

Rosa. Nay, I'm convinced that it is yours; and I request—

March. And so do I, Sir; my daughter must not profit by any such accident.

Sir H. Well, as you please, Sir:—but it's of no use to me; it gives me no pleasure; and therefore I shall only drop it again, you may depend on it.

March. That concerns not me, Sir.—Come, my child, you see how you've restored me. And thus it ever is; let honour triumph, and, like the morning sun, it will dispel the mists of sorrow and despair.

[*Exit with ROSA.*]

Sir H. So! as proud as Lucifer, I see that.—But I'll lay him under an obligation, I'm determined I will—if I set his house on fire, only to put it out again.—Who can he be? where can he come from? I know my old flame, Mrs. Decoy, is in the town; and I'll go inquire of her directly.—And here the chace begins; yes, now I perceive why every thing was tedious and uninteresting—I never hunted out the unfortunate—there is the se-

cret. Let a man make virtue his pursuit, and he'll find life a very pleasant sport, I promise him.

[*Exit.*]

SCENE—*An Apartment at Mrs. DECOY's.*

Enter GABRIEL, dressed in White.

Gabr. Ha! ha! ha! what a rare jolly thing matrimony is!—If I had known it had been half so comical, to be sure I wouldn't have had a slice of it many years ago.—And then to get such a wife! Oh, I'm the luckiest fellow!—I must remember I'm married though? for my guardian has so hurried me into it, and I've so seldom seen my spouse, that, after a glass or two at dinner, I didn't recollect her—no, icod! and I trod on the toe of another man's wife instead of my own—I must also mind on another account; no longer, Gaby, must you be a gay deceiver; no more with killing glances murder every heart.

Enter Mrs. GAB. LACKBRAIN (late Mrs. DECOY)

Mrs. L. Come, my adorable! the curricule's waiting; and as the Cottage must be our place of residence, the sooner we get there the better. But you must invite the baronet; positively Sir Harry is the friend of all others to pass the honey-moon with us.

Gabr. No doubt; and if so great a man will condescend—I tell you what—suppose you get pen and ink, and write to him directly?

Mrs L. I get pen and ink! I write! do you imagine a person of my accomplished education ever devotes a moment to writing?

Gabr. Nan!

Mrs L. No, Sir, that is your department; and whilst you are keeping accounts, managing the house, and looking after the servants, I shall be employed in more important matters—in dancing, singing, playing—in short, in gratifying my husbands vanity, by making myself adored by all mankind.

Gabr. What! so when I want my dinner, you'll be making yourself adored by all mankind! upon my word!—However, you know best; and if you are so accomplished that you can't write a letter, why I must do it for you. So come to the Cottage, and then—

Enter a SERVANT with a letter.

Serv. From Mr. Craftly, Sir: he says it is of the utmost consequence.

Gabr. Indeed! (*opens it, and reads.*)—"Dear
 " Gabriel, Marchmont having escaped from
 " the bailiffs, and being now in search of you
 " to entreat lenity, it is absolutely necessa-
 " ry you should see him, and confirm what
 " I have done: therefore let Mrs. Gabriel go
 " alone to the Cottage, and you may follow
 " in a few hours: for, before Mr. Primitive
 " arrives, both Marchmont and his daughter

“ must be disposed of. P. S. I have ordered
“ all the new furniture you and your wife de-
“ sired.”——Go alone ! what ! part already ?

Mrs. L. Nay, you never disobey your guar-
dian, you know ; and 'tis but for a few hours.
So, shew me to the curricie, Sir (*to the Ser-
vant.*)—And don't now, pray don't hurry
yourself.—Heigho ! I'll support your absence
as well as I can.

Gabr. And so will I yours.—Heigho ! (*in
imitation.*)—Don't be uneasy, I won't be long.

Mrs. L. Adieu !

Gabr. Adieu ! (*again in imitation, and kiss-
ing her hand.*)

[*Exeunt Mrs. LACKBRAIN and SERVANT.*]

Gabr. Oh ! Gaby, Gaby, if marriage be a
lottery, for certain you've drawn the thirty
thousand pound prize. Dang it ! how all the
neighbouring squires will burst with envy, to
know that the “ country put,” as they please
to call me, is heir to a baronet of ten thousand
a year ! and to hear him call me cousin, dear
cousin !—Oh, how I will strut, and cut them !
—I'll speak to nobody but the mayor, and to
him only because he has a chance of being
knighted.

Enter SIR HARRY TORPID.

Sir H. Not here either ! why they certainly
told me this was her house.

Gabr. (*strutting and not seeing him.*) Room,
room for Sir Harry's cousin (*coming against*
SIR HARRY.)

Sir H. Sir, I beg pardon; but pray does Mrs. Decoy live in this house?

Gabr. (*pompously.*) Decoy! there's no such person.

Sir H. No!

Gabr. No!—Ask for Mrs. Lackbrain—Mrs. Gaby Lackbrain.

Sir H. Ha! ha! ha!

Gabr. Why, what do you grin at? have you any objection, Sir?

Sir H. None, none on earth; I am very glad to hear it. I knew she came down here on a fortune-hunting scheme, but I little thought any body would be fool enough to be taken in by her.

Gabr. Taken in! why, do you know who you are talking of? do you know she's cousin to a baronet?

Sir H. I do.

Gabr. That he means to leave her ten thousand a year? that he's soon coming to visit her? and what with hard drinking, keeping him up all night, and making him ride break-neck fox-chases, it's main hard if they don't bury him in a fortnight? and then you know, Mr. Gaby touches every shilling.

Sir H. No he don't.

Gabr. Why?

Sir H. Because there's no shilling to touch, ha! ha!—The baronet's as poor as she is; and Mr Gaby may bury him, but, egad! he must pay for the funeral.

Gabr. Impossible. Odratten! who told you this?

Sir H. Himself: and, what's better, now he tells you so. Sir Harry Torpid in person

informs you, that the late Mrs. Decoy's over head and ears in debt ; and that whoever is her husband, instead of possessing ten thousand a year, he'll be soon peeping through the bars of the county gaol.

Gabr. (half crying) County ga—ol !

Sir H. Yes, 'tis too true. But where is he ? where is the poor devil ? Before he's caged, I should like to have a peep at him.

Gabr. Sir—Sir Harry—I—I am he (*crying*).

Sir H. You !

Gabr. (crying louder). Yes, I'm Gaby ; I'm the poor devil that's to peep through the iron bars. Rot it ! only think now, she talk'd of her family and fortune ; said she'd introduce me to fashionable life, and promis'd to make a buck of me.

Sir H. Well, and she will make a buck of you. But don't take it so to heart—don't cry so, there's a little dear—I dare say you won't be arrested these two hours.

Gabr. It's all my guardian's fault, allowing to his precious octavo.—And see here he is (*looking out*.) Odrabit you ! how I should like to be even with you.

Sir H. So he is—and as I live, the poor author and his daughter with him !—Why, what brings him here ?

Gabr. Why, Mr. Marchmont owes me for rent, and money lent, about two hundred pounds ; and so, by my guardian's order's he's also to peep through the iron bars.—Zounds ! if I wasn't afraid—but there it is, Sir—he rules me with a rod of iron ; and at the age of twenty-four, here am I, a full grown baby in leading strings.

G

Sir H. Psha! rouse, exert yourself; and, if you wish to be revenged, liberate this poor gentleman, release him from the debt he owes you, and you'll not only be even with your guardian, but feel what I never felt till this morning, the pleasure of being in good humour with yourself.

Gabr. I've a great mind—but will you stand by me?

Sir H. That I will; and moreover, go with you to your wife, and accommodate and arrange—

Gabr. Say you so? then I'll work myself up, and pay you off old scores, you old—

Craft. (*without.*) Gabriel! where are you, Gabriel?

Gabr. There, it's all over! his voice plumps me down like a thunderbolt.

Sir H. Nonsense! I'll be at your elbow. Come, come, I saw wine in the next room; a glass or two may rouse, inspire—come, this way, this way.

[*Exeunt at door in flat.*]

Enter CRAFTLY, MARCHMONT, and ROSA.

March. What, what can be the motive for this persecution?

Craft. No matter, Sir; you know the terms: instantly go abroad with your daughter, or hope not to escape a second time.

March. Abroad! what can a foreign country yield me?—Without friends, without me-

ney, and dependent on the labour of the brain, how can I support myself?

Rosa. Aye ; consider, Sir, to leave the Priory would be parting with the only friend we have ; the garden we have reared with our own hands, the trees we have planted to shade us in old age.

Craft. Psha ! stuff, decide instantly, or the bailiffs that are now in the house—

Rosa. Oh, for mercy !—look at him, behold his palid countenance, his languid form—is that an object of resentment ?—(*CRAFTLY turns from her.*)—Nay then, I will appeal to another, the principal shall answer me.

[*SIR HARRY and GABRIEL appear at the door in flat.—SIR HARRY has a bottle of wine in his hand, and is filling a glass for GABRIEL.*]

Sir H. Bravo ! capital ! another glass, and you'll do wonders.—(*GABRIEL drinks it off.*)

Craft. Ay, ay, ask Gabriel ; he'll give you an answer, I warrant.

Rosa. (*to GABRIEL, who has now come forward with SIR HARRY.* Oh ! on my knees let me entreat you, Sir, have compassion on a most unhappy parent ; and if you are not so far ruled by that unfeeling man—

Sir H. (*the bottle and glass still in his hand.*) He ruled ! pooh ! he's his own master now—ar'n't you Gabriel ?

Gabr. (*who has hold of SIR HARRY's arm.*)—Yes, I'm no longer a full-grown baby, or in leading-strings, or—(*Leaves SIR HARRY and advances, CRAFTLY comes up to him and frowns*)—Yes, I am though.—(*Returns to*

SIR HARRY.)—Another bumper, or it's all over again.—(SIR HARRY *fills*, GABRIEL *drinks*.)

Craft. (*following* GABRIEL.) What do you mean, Sir? dare you for a moment dispute my authority?

Sir H. (*to* GABRIEL, *who finishes the glass*.)—And now, instead of sending Mr. Marchmont abroad, or to prison, he bids me say, That he not only releases him from the debt he owes him; but as to his guardian and his authority—Oh! damme, he don't care that for him (*snapping his fingers*).

Gabr. (*snapping his*.) No, I don't care that for you, old octavo.—(*CRAFTLY advancing in a menacing attitude, GABRIEL runs behind* SIR HARRY, *and speaks over his shoulder*.)—I don't; Mr. Marchmont is free; and now you're ruffled in your turn.

Craft. Hear me, hear me, I command. Instantly call up the bailiffs that are below stairs, and order them to seize him, or by heaven—

Sir H. Bailiffs below stairs!—Come along, friend Gabriel: you lay hold of Mr. Marchmont's arm, and conduct him through the myrmidons, and I'll take care of the lady: and, d'ye hear, bring the bottle along with you; and once arrived at the Priory, we'll drink success to the sons of genius, and confusion to those who oppress them.

Gabr. With all my heart. Here goes (*fills a glass, and drinks*); Success to myself, and confusion to those who oppress me.

Craft. Death and fire! I'll go directly to Mrs. Lackbrain; I'll—

Enter JENKINS.

Jenk. I'm sorry to be the bearer of unwelcome news; but several tradesmen are below, who have sent in large lots of furniture to the Cottage, and they insist on receiving their money directly.

Craft. Ay! I'm glad of that; now comes my triumph. Pay, husband, pay for your wife's furniture.

Jenk. No, Sir: they say Mrs. Lackbrain is considerably in debt; that she came down here on a matrimonial speculation; and therefore, as you ordered in the furniture in your own name, they look to you, and you alone, for payment.

Gabr. (*spitting out wine he had been drinking.*) Icod! he'll peep through the iron bars before me, ha! ha!

Sir H. Yes, and he may call up the bailiffs to arrest himself now, ha! ha! ha!—But lead on, and don't despond, friend Gabriel.

Gabr. Not I: if I've got one troublesome companion by the bargain, I'm sure he has got a couple; and a man may by accident get rid of a wife, but the devil himself can't shake off John Doe and Richard Roe; icod! they'll stick to you.—And so, thank ye kindly for the furniture, guardy.—And now, brother genius, now for freedom and the Priory. [*Exeunt.*]

THE END OF THE SECOND ACT.

ACT III.

SCENE—*Outside of Hotel and View of the Town.*

Enter CRAFTLY and JONATHAN.

Craft. Arrived! my cousin Primitive, now in the hotel. Why, zounds! we didn't expect him home these six weeks.

Jon. No, Sir; but the fleet sailing sooner than was intended, and the wind being peculiarly favourable—

Craft. Well, but how is he? and how are you, Jonathan? I'm heartily sorry—that is, glad—that is—Death and fire! that he should arrive when one's so perplexed and embarrassed!

Jon. My master is all joy and expectation, Sir—so anxious to behold the new married couple, and the cottage, and the farm—he has talked of nothing else all the voyage—but you'll excuse me, Sir, I have a message to Mr. Clifford.

Craft. Clifford! why what has your master to do with Clifford?

Jon. Why, Sir, his father, who resides in Jamaica, has appointed Mr. Primitive his guardian—the young gentleman is already apprized of the circumstance by letter, and

I'm now going to request an interview—but see—there is my master, after an absence of thirty years, you behold him come home to share his fortune with the young couple.

Graft. So I do.

[*Exit* JONATHAN.

And as I mean to touch a third of his fortune, I must keep him in the dark about the young couple—yes; much as I detest, I must not expose them—for, as the joke goes, if we don't hang together, by Heavens we shall hang separately.

Enter PRIMITIVE *from the Hotel.*

Welcome, my dear cousin—once more welcome to your native town. Why! you made haste to get here. You did not stay long in London.

Prim. London! plague on the place, it's worse than ever.—In point of heat, Jamaica's cool to it—in point of noise, a hurricane is silence to it—and for company and conversation, certainly the crew of the ship I came in, runs it very hard indeed, cousin.

Graft. Ha! ha! ha! still devoted to a country life I see.

Prim. Oh, yes—I think of nothing else—for there's the seat of purity and peace; and now for it, coz—now for the darling theme—Gabriel's married I find.

Graft. Yes, he's married. (*sighs aside*).

Prim. And to a woman of your chusing—to a sweet innocent soul, that's as much attached to rural life as her husband is.

Craft. Yes, as much as he is.

Prim. And they're now at the cottage—and I am come in time for the honey-moon—Oh, my dear cousin, this is all your doing!—you gave him a country education—you taught him to manage the farm I purchased—and now if I can but get rid of my old malady—If I can but forget my poor, poor daughter!—

Craft. What! grieve for her when she has been dead these twelve years? and consider you scarcely recollect her, for she was but a child—only eight years old when you sent her from Jamaica to a London boarding school.

Prim. That's it—sending her to London was the cause of all—There Marchmont saw her, eloped with her! Oh! if I had but brought her up in the country—But come—I'll do my best—only in the midst of my happiness, if now and then you see a tear trickle down my cheek, you'll know it is for my lost, my wronged Louisa.

Enter JONATHAN and CLIFFORD.

Jon. Here's Mr. Clifford, Sir.

Prim. Well, Sir, have you read your good father's letter?

Clif. I have, Sir, and I find my income is not only to pass through your hands; but in case of my neglecting my studies, you have the power to withhold it altogether.

Prim. Even so, Sir—your father has heard a bad account of you; he has been informe

that instead of studying Law in your chambers, you are always idling and raking. And here—here's a proof of it—what brings you to this gay, dissipated place, Sir?

Clif. My physicians prescribed it, Sir.

Prim. Your physicians, Sir?

Clif. Yes, Sir,—fatigue from study, and the bad air of London, produced such a pain in my chest.

Prim. Pain in!—well come, that's not unlikely; for by the advertisements in the newspapers, the bad air of London affects every body's health. Faith, there is nothing going forward but lumbagos, nervosities, catarrhs, and imbecilities.

Craft. Psha, that's all an imposition—a trick of the quack doctors.

Prim. Nay, don't tell me cousin; for passing through the west end of the town, every young man I met was debilitated, or short-sighted, or ricketty, or had a defect in his voice. Poor fellows, you can't think how sincerely I pitied them! I did indeed; and if I had not reserved all my fortune for Gabriel, I'd build an hospital for the benefit of the infirm and decayed beaux of Bond-street.—But come, the more I talk on't, the more I sigh for the cottage—so we'll just go visit a few old friends and relations, return and rest in the hotel, and betimes in the morning set off, and surprise the innocent, the Arcadian couple.

Craft. So we will; and as to the settlement, cousin—

Prim. Oh! if they behave as I expect—I shan't wait till the year's out—and d'ye hear, Mr. Clifford, do nothing dishonorable, and I

shall neither controul you in your pleasures, or your expences; and if you delight in rural scenery and innocent mirth, come and pass a few weeks at the cottage—I'll warrant 'twill cure your pain in the chest—Now, cousin! oddsheart! I'm so pleased and so gratified, that if it were not for some secret gnawings, about my poor daughter—but s'life! why do I think of her? as you say she was but a child when I last saw her, and she's gone, and I'm the happiest (*half crying*), merriest old fellow living.

[*Exit with JONATHAN and CRAFTLY.*

Clif. S'death! what can my father mean by making me dependant on the caprice of an old dotard!—However, I see I can easily dupe him, and in the end, I shall not only get my own income, but part of his into the bargain; and now once more for the object of my search, the disdainful Mrs. Belford—zounds, shall I never recover her?

Enter WILLIAM.

Will. Joy, Sir! she's found—the runaway's found!—not half an hour ago, I saw her enter the Priory.

Clif. What, Mrs. Belford!

Will. Yes, Sir; she's gone there as a teacher of music and drawing to Mr. Marchmont's daughter,—and knowing he was a strange character, and might prevent your gaining possession of her—I have already seen him, and secured him in our interest.

Clif. That's well, then she's for ever mine ; but how—how did you contrive to deceive Marchmont?

Will. Why, Sir, I met him on the road, and told him a person of very suspicious character was now with his daughter—and if he'd wait on you—you'd give him information and advice ; and see here he is, Sir.

Enter MARCHMONT hastily.

March. Mr. Clifford, am I to believe—

Clif. 'Tis too true, Sir ; the person now with your daughter may not only corrupt her young and inexperienced mind, but absolutely decoy her from your protection.

March. Astonishing ! who is she ?

Clif. To speak the truth, a lady who has eloped from a most affectionate husband ; and as she is a distant relation of mine, I'm pursuing her to restore her to her family.

March. And being lost herself—she would reduce all others to her level—Oh ! she is the agent of some villain ! and now I recollect—the pocket-book my daughter found, no doubt was dropped by her, to aid their dark intentions.

Clif. Pocket-book ! ha ! that must have been Sir Harry's—I'll work on this and turn it to account (*aside.*) Now you mention it—I saw in her possession a pocket-book of curious workmanship ;—silver'd—blue.

March. The same—the same—Oh ! that is ample confirmation ; and this is the result of my too sanguine folly ; for, on a false and most precarious prospect, I advertised for a

teacher for my child ; and now, she who has nursed me, toil'd for me—nay, whose very thoughts have saved me hours of labor, she's to be corrupted and taken from me ! Come let us lose no time in hastening to her—

Clif. No, but I hope you will not trust her story—we've been too long acquainted, I presume—

March. We have, and you've no motive for deceiving me—No—No—she is employed by some seducer—and I would rather trust my daughter with an host of men, than with one woman of suspicious fame. But she's in danger, and let me fly to save her.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE—*A Gothic apartment in the Priory.*

Enter ROSA and Mrs. BELFORD—Mrs. B. in a Hat and Veil.

Rosa. Oh! you do not know how deeply you have interested me. Pray proceed with your story—you lately came from Switzerland you say?

Mrs. B. I did : under the protection of a most kind and liberal lady—but on my arrival, being persecuted by the artful addresses of her nephew ; and she, innocently becoming his advocate ; I was compelled to leave her.

Rosa. And have you no other friend ?

Mrs. B. None, none on earth ; and am reduced to such an abject state of poverty—

that reading your advertisement for a teacher in music, I thought I would apply for the situation, as the last hope of saving me from want.

Rosa. And I'm so glad you read it! My father will soon return, and then I hope he will persuade you to live with us for ever.—He is most tender and affectionate; but, as he tells me, I want a female monitor, for, alas! I never had a mother to instruct me.

Mrs. B. No!—

Rosa. No! she died when I was yet an infant; poor woman! I often shed tears to her memory. I'd give the world were she alive—

Mrs. B. Would you? good girl! I have been—nay, perhaps, am still a mother; and could I even hope, my child e'er thought, or talked of me as you do—but no more of this—let us to the theme on which we meet—and before I venture to instruct you, give me a specimen of my scholar's talents.

Rosa. Most willingly—I'll sing my favorite ballad.

SONG.

Sweetly in Life's jocund morning,
 Beam'd on me a father's smile;
 Joy with livelier charms adorning,
 Cheering grave instruction's toil.
 Cruel memory, too severely,
 Tells me those blest hours are gone,
 Which with him I priz'd so dearly,
 He has frown'd, and they are flown!
 Love, which drew these sorrows on me,
 Love alone can yield relief;
 The pitying power that has undone me,
 Pours the balm that heals my grief.
 What though memory so severely,
 Tells me that my joys are gone;
 Let but him I love so dearly
 Smile, and all my cares are flown.

E

Mrs. B. Merciful pow'rs!—who taught you this?

Rosa. My father!

Mrs. B. Your father!—speak—his name?

Rosa. Marchmont.

Mrs. B. And you!—Oh, yes: I see it now—'tis she!—'tis she herself! (*weeps, and kisses ROSA's hand violently.*)

Rosa. Bless me! what agitates you?

Mrs. B. Nothing! pardon me—it is your likeness to your mother that distracts me!—then these words—they were your mother's, Rosa.

Rosa. Did you know her? Oh! speak of her—inform me quick, tell me every thing about her—I would walk barefoot through the world, and think each pang that wrung my weary feet were joy! were ecstasy! could I but learn some tidings of my mother.

Mrs. B. What! has your father never told you?

Rosa. Never: the subject is forbidden me; and if, perchance, I name her, he shews such anger, and such secret horror!

Mrs. B. Oh! If I dared to reveal—but no, still—I must still be mute (*aside*)

March (without) Rosa! Rosa Marchmont!

Mrs. B. (trembling) Heaven's! that voice (*aside*).

Rosa. It is my father.

Mrs. B. I know—I recollect the sound—and like the knell of death it strikes upon my heart! what can I do? where go? I'll fly—and—alas! my limbs will not support me.

Rosa Nay, stay. Why—why be afraid to see him?

Mrs. B. True; why should innocence de-

scend to fear—and yet 'tis most awful to encounter—(*trembling and looking towards the door*). Ha ! he comes—hide, hide me from his sight (*pulls down her veil, and gets behind ROSA*).

Enter MARCHMONT and CLIFFORD.

March. Look ! look were she stands, infusing poison into the breast of innocence !

Clif. Ay, that's she ; and if you value your own or your daughter's honor, part them this instant.

March. Rosa, shame on you, girl, to countenance, and be corrupted by a stranger.

Mrs. B. Corrupted ! I corrupt her ! (*aside.*)

March. (*to Mrs. BELFORD, who is still behind ROSA, with her veil down.*) Mark me, Madam—You see before you one who, though oppressed by fortune, scorns to infringe the laws of hospitality, and willingly would share his last sad pittance with the poor :—but when he's told by him whom he respects—that you have stolen to his house to spoil and rob him of his only treasure, he must, and will be answered. I am above condemning you unheard, therefore explain—(*Mrs. BELFORD shews great agitation.*) What ! not a word ? (*pauses*). Again I do entreat you—still silent ? Nay, then we part—this is no fit asylum for you.

Mrs. B. Oh, mercy ! mercy !

Clif. I'll follow her, and take this opportunity to bear her quietly to her home.

March. Be it so,—but observe me, Clifford—as I have done my duty, you do yours:—though guilty, she is still an object of compassion; and therefore, rather pity than reproach her. *[Exit CLIFFORD.]*

My daughter! *(resting his head on her shoulder).*

Rosa. My father! what have you done?

March. What I ought to do—saved my Rosa from disgrace;—and yet I know not why—poor woman! I feel as if I'd acted harshly towards her.

Rosa. And well you may, Sir; for, if I dare impart it, she was my mother's friend.

March. How?

Rosa. She knew her, loved her, and expressed such admiration—

March. Peace, I command you;—vile impostress! this was an artifice so base, that I no longer pity, but despise her. Nay: not a word—Attend me to my study.—She your mother's friend! Oh, she was all innocence and truth! And at this moment I see her in those eyes—that form—that—but what am I conversing on? where wandering? to my study—lead to my study. *[Exeunt.]*

SCENE—A room in the Hotel.

Enter PRIMITIVE, JONATHAN, and WAITER.

Prim. There, there—this room will do, waiter, this room will do.

Wait. But I tell you, Sir, it is bespoken—and the hotel is so cramm'd with company, I can't offer you another.

Prim. Call the landlord then ; he'll find room for an old acquaintance, I warrant.

Wait. Sir, my master's not at home—just gone to the sailing match, in his own yatch, with Miss Laura Maria and Miss Anna Matilda!

Prim. Miss Laura Maria and Miss Anna Matilda ! and pray who the deuce are they ?

Wait. My master's own daughters, Sir ; as accomplished young ladies as any in the county,—just come down from Rantipole-house Academy, near London, Sir.—But, Sir, this room belongs to Mr. Clifford.

Prim. Mr. Clifford—Oh, then you may go—he is my most intimate friend, and I'll answer for the consequences. [*Exit WAITER.* Why, Jonathan, this town is Londonized, quite turned upside down ;—when I left England, this hotel was an ale-house, and the landlord here a post boy—and now he goes to sailing matches in his own yatch ; sends his daughters to Rantipole-house, and calls them Miss Laura Maria and Miss Anna Matilda ! mercy on me ! mercy on me !

Jon. Strange alterations, indeed, Sir :—but about your cousins. After so long an absence, I warrant they were all glad to see you

Prim. Why, there again we are all metamorphosed, Jonathan. I found the alderman, who is now in his sixtieth year, learning to dance ; and on my expressing my astonishment, he told me the dancing master owed him thirty pounds for soap and candles ; and the debt being a bad one, his wife insisted he should take it out in lessons ; and there he was—sa, sa, (*mimicking*) ha ! ha !

Jon. Ha ! ha !

Prim. Then young Shiftly, whom I left a plodding lawyer, is now a snug apothecary : —he says physic is by far the finest trade going ; for the women, blessings on them ! wear such thin dresses, that, what with friendly showers and propitious east winds, the whole medical tribe get cloath'd by their nakedness ! And I'm sure he speaks truth ; for, when we landed, don't you remember, I was ashamed to look about me ? Says I, “ Fie, Jonathan, “ don't you see the ladies are all in their “ bathing dresses : and if you peep at them, you'll ”——But, however, 'tis a cursed delicate subject ; and, upon my soul, shocks my modesty only to talk on it.—Oh ! would I were safely perched at the fire-side of the cottage.

Jon. Aye, that will make you amends ; there you will witness no folly nor dissipation.—And what say you, Sir ? Suppose I go and prepare for the morning ?

Prim. Do, Jonathan ; and d'ye hear, be stirring as early as five—but don't trouble yourself to call me. Joy and expectation will keep me awake—

[Exit JONATHAN.]

Yes, there I shall sit down content for life, and with the two unsophisticated cottagers, looking up to me as a father—Father ! Psha ! I can't bear the word—it reminds me of my poor dead—s'life ! I can't bear that word either—Plague on't, why did she die ? What right had she to leave me, who never wrong'd her—didn't I tho' ? Because she married the man of her heart, didn't I, like an old worldly savage, desert, abandon—I'll tell you what—don't you talk of the vices of mankind, Mr.

Primitive ; by Heaven, you're as great a profligate as any of them (*stamping of feet is heard without.*) Heh ! what's that noise ? (*looks out*) As I live, a man bearing a woman in his arms ! another cousin, I suppose.—I'll observe (*retires up stage.*)

Enter CLIFFORD with Mrs. BELFORD.

Clif. There—rest there awhile (*placing her in a chair.*) Nay, nay ; resistance is in vain, the landlord and all his servants are at my disposal ; (*locks door, and puts the key into his pocket ;*) and in the morning we'll take a pleasant sail to Lisbon.

Mrs. B. Oh ! for mercy ! you know not whom you force me from !

Clif. Nay, nay ; 'tis all for your advantage : but as 'tis necessary to make instant preparations for our voyage, I must to my chamber, and get money and other articles ; now don't be uneasy, 'tis all for your happiness, I assure you. [*Exit.*]

Prim. (*advances, not seen by Mrs. B.*) So this is one way of curing the pain in the chest !

Mrs. B. Heavens ! but a few short minutes past I was in sight of all that's dear to me on earth—of Rosa, and—yes, I am weak enough to own it—of Rosa and her father. Where am I now ?—imprisoned by a villain ! on the point of being forced to a foreign country ! without hope, without friends !

Prim. No, not without friends—you see one before you.

Mrs. B. Away—you're a confederate with this vile seducer.

Prim. I a confederate! I a seducer! Bless you, only look at these wrinkles (*pointing to his face*;) and if that does not satisfy you, feel if a seducer ever possessed this, a heart that beats and sympathizes for the distresses of a woman.

Mrs. B. It does.—And now I look again, I think, oh, yes! I'm sure you will not add to my afflictions.

Prim. No; and to prove it, without asking, or knowing who this Rosa is, I'll instantly conduct you to her.

Mrs. B. No, not to her; for kingdoms not to her.

Prim. Why? has she too been unkind to you.

Mrs. B. No, she never could—but her father! He who should protect me with his life—he banished me his house—he—Oh! my brain cannot support the recollection! But I will shew him—Yes, if I deign to think of him again, 'twill be with scorn—with fixed determined scorn.

Prim. That's right, I applaud your spirit; let him and Clifford cut each other's throats, and do you go with me.—Harkye! are you fond of retirement? do you love pastoral life?

Mrs. B. Oh, yes! that is what I sigh for—retirement's all that's left me.

Prim. Say you so: then I'll conduct you to such an Arcadian scene! You must know, my nephew and niece have got a cottage about four miles off, and I'm going to live with

them; and you shall be of the party—and we'll plant, sow, and feed the pigs and poultry together—and then—for society! to be sure, our live stock can't be so witty as the pleasant Mr. Clifford and his friend. However, there is this consolation—sheep can't betray us, nor cows tell lies of us—so, come, let us be gone (*trying to open the door, finds it locked.*) S'life! I forgot we are prisoners here.

Mrs. B. We are; and so surrounded by enemies, that tho' you have the wish, alas! you've not the power to serve me; and look, here he comes again.

Re-enter CLIFFORD.

Clif. My mind is alter'd.—There may be danger in remaining here to night—therefore we'll to the ship directly—and for old Primitive——

Prim. Well, Sir; and what of old Primitive? Your servant, Mr. Studious—I'm glad your pain in the chest is better.

Clif. (*much confused.*) Better—Sir: I don't understand—I assure you, at this moment I don't feel very well, Sir.

Prim. No! How should you, Sir! I never heard that ill treating a woman was for the good of a man's health—but, come, Sir—favor me with the key of that room.

Clif. Certainly, Sir.—You may depart when you please: but for this lady (*taking hold of her,*) she must stay with me.

Prim. Must, Sir!

Clif. Aye, *must* Sir: we never part again.

Prim. So, you'd detain her (*Clifford nods assent.*) Pray, Sir, give me leave to ask you—What is your income?

Clif. My income, Sir?

Prim. Aye: Have you any thing in houses, lands, or the funds? or, simply nothing more than what your father allows you?

Clif. Nothing, Sir.

Prim. Then I give you joy—persist in your gentlemanly intentions, and your father will disinherit you; or, if that will content you, I will annihilate you. Yes, Sir, tho' I never betrayed innocence—I know too well what it is to desert it! And the goadings I felt at this instant for having abandoned my own child—I'll tell you what—rather than undergo the agony of forsaking another female, I'd march up to the mouth of a cannon, be shot at by a whole regiment, or, what's more, submit to be hanged for ridding the world of the decayed, the honourable Mr. Clifford.

Mrs. B. Nay, consider, Sir, we are in his power.

Prim. Psha! what should I be afraid of? Tho' older than he is by 40 years—I'm still the youngest of the two. My stamina is not undermined by dissipation—I've got no pain in the chest—and if exchanging shots isn't the modern mode of fighting, I'll go a step lower and condescend to box him.—Yes, I will—I'll box him—

Clif. Well, Sir, I acknowledge my dependence; and if you will but listen—

Prim. Not a word, Sir—First open the door; and next, in person, conduct us safely

out of this house. Nay, no demurring—do it: I insist.

Clif. And if I do, I hope——

Prim. Sir, I shall make no promises (*CLIFFORD opens door and exit.*) Come, Madam; in my time gallantry was a very different sort of business. Tho' we were cowardly enough to avoid the dangers of seduction, we were still bold enough, and I hope ever will be, to protect innocence and punish villany.

[*Exeunt.*]

THE END OF THE THIRD ACT.

A C T IV.

SCENE—*A small Room in the Cottage, folding Doors thrown open in the back Scene and variegated Lamps hung round them; also, Festoons of Flowers—a short Dance—Voices are heard singing,*

“Come, come, one and all,

“Attend to my call,

“And revel in pleasures that never can cloy;

“Come see rural felicity,

“Which love and innocence ever enjoy.”

Enter Sir HARRY TORPID from Ball Room.

Sir H. This retirement! this pastoral life! Gad, instead of being inside of my friend Gabriel's cottage, one might fancy one's-self in the purlieus of Covent Garden—for not an hour ago, talking with Mrs. Lackbrain at the paddock gate, I suddenly received a blow on my head, which I as suddenly returned; and, I fancy, laid my adversary low: but it being quite dark, and the lady wishing to be gone, I havn't the honor of knowing to whom I am indebted.—However, it was a glorious bang! it roused me! 'tis life! agitation! And whoever the gentleman is, I've to thank him for bringing me into a fine whirligig state.

Enter BETTY.

Ha ! Betty, what brings you here ?

Betty. My mistress, Sir, desired me to give you this note the moment I found you alone.

Sir H. Indeed! (*taking the letter, opening it, and reading.*) "Dear coz, I haven't yet been able to find out who the savage was that interrupted our little *tete-a-tete* at the paddock gate : but, if you wish to renew the conversation relative to providing for Marchmont, meet me in my dressing-room in half an hour ; and I'll do all in my power to serve him. LYDIA LACKBRAIN."

So, more cottage diversion ! However, if, without injuring my honour, I can restore Marchmont and the lovely Rosa to independence, my time cannot be passed better. Tell your mistress I'll be punctual !

Betty. Yes, Sir.

Sir H. And for this affair at the paddock gate, bid her hush it up, if she can. As I could not distinguish my antagonist, I hope he won't know me—for fighting with a man in love is—but, go ; for here's my friend Gabriel.

[*Exit BETTY.*

Enter GABRIEL, half drunk from the Ball room.

Gabr. Oh ! my dear, dear friend—you're the very man I have been looking for.—Come—come with me this moment.

F

Sir H. With you ! Where ?

Gabr. Where ! Why, in search of the most obstropulous, infernal—Dang it, would you believe it, Cousin Baronet ? Mrs. Gaby's faithless ; and now, in the very middle of our honey-moon—I do actually think that real downright *nem. con.* is going forward.

Sir H. Fie ! impossible !

Gabr. Harkee ! You know Miss Sally Sassafra, the apothecary's heart-breaking daughter—who, if possible, kills more people than her father :—well, I had peirced her to the soul with one of my murdering glances ; and after putting on her hat and cloak had persuaded her to walk with me, when, as the devil would have it, I overheard my wife whispering with a man—Ay, and though it was too dark to see him, ecod, I felt him. For thinks I, if you'll plant lumps on my head, I'd better plant bumps on yours ; so I gave him such a douce—

Sir H. (eagerly.) My dear fellow, where—where did this happen ?

Gabr. Where ! Why, at the paddock gate, now, not an hour ago. (*Sir HARRY looks confused.*) Good soul ! I knew you'd feel for me consumedly.

Sir H. I do !—and for myself too consumedly (*aside.*)

Gabr. I said he would take on as much as if the case were his own :—but don't you, now—don't be down-hearted.—You'll see that I'll serve him just as I served Jemmy Swagger.

Sir H. And, pray, how did you serve Jemmy Swagger ?

Gab. Why, I behaved very ill to Jemmy Swagger, and he sent me a challenge ; so I

took my friend with me—this young gentleman (*pulling his stick from under his coat*); and so I thumt him till he ask'd pardon: and in the like manner I'll serve this pad-dock hero, and you shall be by all the time. Ha! ha! you like fun—you like life, you know.

Sir H. Yes! but I don't like death you know—give it up, for your own sake—These sort of rencontres always get into the public prints. People just catch the names of the parties, huddle the innocent with the guilty, and coolly remark, a blackguard business, and a damned set of scoundrels altogether—give it up therefore.

Gabr. No, I won't—you have been very kind to me, and I'll break his bones, if it is only to amuse you, Cousin.—(*loud knocking at the door*)—What's that?—(*more knocking*,—Again! and so early in the morning!

Enter BETTY.

Betty. Oh, Sir, my mistress is terrified out of her senses! Mr Craftly is below telling her that Mr. Primitive is unexpectedly arrived from Jamaica, and will be here in half an hour.

Gabr. My uncle here in half an hour! Od dang it—I'm sorry to disappoint you—but you see I must postpone the operation.

Sir H. My dear Sir, don't mention it; if you postpone it for ever, it will be no disappointment to me, I promise you. Adieu! Now for the dressing-room; and having served Marchmont, then for the Priory! Gad, this

is bustle! this is Life! while it lasts, or the devil's in it! [Exit.

Gabr. My uncle so near—so—

Enter CRAFTLY and MRS. LACKBRAIN.

Mrs. L. So, 'so! Here's a pretty business—Mr. Primitive not half a mile off, and you're in a fine state to receive him—with a head full of wine at this time in the morning.

Gabr. And what are you? with a house full of dancers and whisperers at this time in the morning.

Craft. Psha! wrangling won't help us. I fancy we are none of us over fond of each other.—Indeed, for my part, I candidly acknowledge, rather do you both a mischief than a—service.

Mrs. L. I am sure you're very kind, Sir!

Craft. But as the old pigeon is arrived, we must combine to pluck him; and, first, we must undermine this favorite he has brought with him.

Mrs. L. What favorite?

Craft. Why a lady he met with last night at the hotel. He has already conceived a great regard for her: but as he acknowledges he knows nothing of her, and Clifford assures me she is a woman of suspicious character, you'll give hints on her introduction.

Mrs. L. Never fear, leave me alone—I'll say I know her.

Gabr. That's enough—if she says she is one of her acquaintances, 'tis all over with her—or if that fails I'll say she is one of mine.

Craft. Good! and now, while Mrs. Lack-brain disposes of the company, and puts on a more plain and appropriate dress, you and I will go and receive the old gentleman.—And remember, from this hour you are plain simple cottagers; and, hard and irksome as it is, you must henceforth appear a fond, loving couple.

Mrs. L. (sighing) 'Tis very irksome! but we must do it: but, go, go, and impose on your credulous uncle.

Gabr. I'll do what my head will let me, for at this moment there's more dancing in it than in your ball-room. However, if there's any danger, guardy here will lend me his little octavo; and, now I think on't, we must take pains on his account, because he paid for all this pretty furniture, you know. Ha! ha! ha!—

Craft. Psha! nonsense; come along and try, try to disguise your situation.

Gabr. Pooh! don't my situation disguise me! Besides, what are you afraid of—remember the sons of genius. Didn't I, by drinking a few generous bumpers, make a fool of him who has made a fool of thousands?—but now for it—now let me recollect—I am a fond, steady—u—u—uh! (*hiccuping*) That's it, I'm the exact thing already. [*Exit with CRAFTLY,—MRS. LACKBRAIN at folding doors.*]

SCENE—*Outside of a Cottage, standing in a romantic Vale surrounded by Mountains.*

Enter PRIMITIVE and MRS. BELFORD.

Prim. Huzza, there ! there it is, the end of all my hopes and all my wishes ! Delightful, innocent, romantic sight !

Mrs. B. This is, indeed, a spot more lovely than e'en my fancy pictured.

Prim. Oh ! 'tis Arcadia ! Paradise ! And, to make my joys unbearable, think that Nature does not confine herself to the outside ; no, she also dwells within. And the young cottagers—the dear the darling pair ! but represent the spot around them.

Mrs. B. No doubt : for here is no temptation to be guilty, *singing in cottage*—"Come, "come one and all," &c.) Listen, what singing's that ?

Prim. Don't you know ? It is the plowman as he trudges to his morning's work, carolling his simple ditty ! Sweet fascinating sound ! (*Music in cottage.*) And, hark again ! Do you hear that music ?

Mrs. B. I do : to me it sounded like a flute.

Prim. Flute ! bless you—it is the shepherd's pipe—it is the music of Arcadia ! Oh ! if this lasts, I shan't live to see the inside.

Enter JAMES from the cottage.

Heh ? who comes here ? One of the servants—mum ! He won't know me, so I'll be cunning and sift him—now mind—Good morning, Sir.

James. The same to you, Sir.

Prim. I wish to speak with Mr. or Mrs. Lackbrain ; but 'tis too early, I suppose they are neither of them out of bed yet.

James. Yes ? Sir, they are both up.

Prim. Up ! what, at five in the morning !

James. Yes : and, what's more extraordinary, they are up every morning at the same hour.

Prim. There now, in London, who ever hears of such early rising ? One question more, if you please—pray where may you be going ?

James. Why, if you must know, Sir, I am going to leave these cards of invitation at some great houses about twelve miles off (*produces them*).

Prim. Cards of invitation ! I don't like that ; it smacks of the squares—the city—the—give me leave (*takes one and reads.*) “Mrs. “ Gabriel Lackbrain, at home every evening this week :” you may go—I'm satisfied !—never—never was such an instance of domestic and connubial happiness !—at home every evening ! come, let us enter and behold.

[*Exit JAMES.*

Enter CRAFTLY and GABRIEL, still drunk.

Craft. (*speaking as he enters.*) This way Gabriel—this way—

Gabr. Softly, the air makes me worse—your arm, lend me your arm—(*Lays hold of CRAFTLY'S arm*).

Prim. There he is! there's the true, genuine, and unadulterated child of nature—Come to thy uncle's arms (*GAB. is afraid to leave CRAFTLY'S arm.*) S'life, what are you afraid of, Gabriel? come to thy uncle's arms, I say! (*GAB. leaves CRAFTLY'S arm, but finding he can't support himself, staggers and reels back to CRAFTLY.*) look! now, look at the rural embarrassment! don't be ashamed, boy, it is worth all the ease and impudence of town-bred puppies.

Gabr. I'm quite overcome, I assure you, uncle.

Prim. Delightful diffidence! you rogue, I've heard of your pranks, of your early rising every morning, and of your being at home every evening; and if I hadn't, your countenance would have betrayed you:—look at that flush of health (*GAB. smiles.*)—look at that rosy hue (*GAB. bursts out laughing*)—ha! ha! there again? now that's the true broad laugh of innocence and nature.

Gabr. (*aside to CRAFTLY*.) I say, guardy, there's no fear of his finding me out—for ecod! he's as drunk as Chloe.

Prim. But come, where is your other half? If she prove as uncorrupted as yourself, I shan't wait till the years out, no—I'll sign the settlement to-morrow.

*Enter MRS. LACKBRAIN in a plain Chip Hat,
Cloak, &c.*

Craft. That's well, that's a neat cottage dress.

Gabr. Ah! here she is, uncle here's the sweet source of connubial joy.

Mrs. L. Dear Gabriel!

Gabr. Divine Lydia! (*taking her hand and kissing it.*)

Prim. Fond pair! the Golden Age is returned, and I see—(*taking out his handkerchief and half crying*)—I see they were born to make me the happiest of middle-aged gentlemen.—But now for it, now for the inside.—Odsheart! I forgot though—I must particularly recommend this lady to the attention of you both; she is an object of compassion (*taking Mrs. B. by the hand*); and as such, I'm sure she must be welcome. (*GABR. and Mrs. L. both draw back.*)—Why, what d'ye stare at?—She deserves it, believe me, she deserves it.

Mrs. L. No doubt: but pray, Sir, have you known the lady long?

Prim. Till yesterday I never saw her.

Mrs. L. So I thought:—but this is not a proper place for explanation; pray walk in, and we'll talk further.—This way, Ma'am, this way.

Prim. Aye, this way.—And now, as the song says,

Henceforth I'll lead a village life,
 In cottage most obscure-a ;
 For, with this loving man and wife,
 My joys are quite secure-a.

[*Exeunt* PRIMITIVE, Mrs. B. and Mrs. L.
Craft. Well, Gabriel, what do you think ?

Gabr. Think, that he beats me hollow :—
 I'm only a child of nature ; but damme ! he's
 a natural. And now, if spouse undermines
 the stranger—

Craft. Aye, once get her out of the house,
 and Clifford will instantly take her abroad.
 You see that vessel yonder—he's waiting for
 me to bring him information.

Gabr. Indeed !

Craft. Yes : and Marchmont and his daughter
 are for ever cut out of their chance. So
 now all's safe ; and while I go to Clifford, do
 you send for a lawyer to prepare the settle-
 ment ; and then we'll say the Golden Age is
 returned.

Gabr. We will ; and I'll go send for a law-
 yer directly.—[*Exit* CRAFT.]—But now, first
 for my paddock gentleman : by this time I
 hope my servants have found him out, and—
 dang it ! nothing shall make me forget my pro-
 mise to cousin baronet—and then, let nunky
 once sign the settlement, and I'll also say, as
 the song says—

The scene is chang'd, 'tis alter'd quite,
 No more I'm simple Gaby ;
 I'll learn to dance, to sing, and fight,
 And ogle every lady.

[*Exit*

SCENE—*A small Room in the Cottage; a Door in the Flat, a Chair placed near it. Enter SIR HARRY TORPID from Door in Flat.*

Sir H. 'Sdeath! this will never do: I have been alone in that dressing-room these two hours; and though I'm in love, I still can't support solitude—no, I shall certainly relapse, if somebody don't come and rattle me into an agreeable state of vexation. I feel all the symptoms, the doze, the stupor, the numbness.—Egad! I almost long for my friend Gabriel, and his lumps and bumps; any thing in preference to this dying style of living.—Ha! a reprieve! I see the thing of all others likely to produce agitation—a petticoat! and, no doubt, Mrs. Gabriel. I'll return to the dressing-room.—[*Re-enters.*]

Enter PRIMITIVE and MRS. BELFORD.

Prim. Now do, for my sake, pray, pray justify yourself.

Mrs. B. Sir, I have told you I am slandered.

Prim. Well but consider, what Mrs. Gabriel says is perfectly true; I know nothing of your history, she does; and if I should defile this innocent abode, by introducing to it a person of suspicious character—

Mrs. B. Suspicious?

Prim. Pardon me ; these were my niece's words, not mine : and when she added, her husband's constancy might be corrupted—

Mrs. B. Corrupted ! and by me !—Sir, I can only answer, I am innocent ; and if this be doubted, let me be gone. I know, by losing you, I've lost my best, my only friend ; but if you think I'd be indebted for my safety to those who say I would disgrace my benefactor, and mar connubial and domestic love, you know but little of me. I cannot guess the motive for their cruelty ; nor should I, by accusing others, vindicate myself ; but let me tell you, Sir, slander is a rank and poisonous weed, and never yet took root in pure unsullied ground.

Prim. Well then, why don't you explain yourself ?—Plague on't ! why not tell me your name, your family, your history ?—Come now do, do be good-natured.

Mrs. B. Alas ! I dare not.

Prim. Dare not !

Mrs. B. No ; my pride won't suffer me : and my story would but expose one, whom, spite of all my wrongs, I still am weak enough to—(*pulls out her handkerchief and weeps.*)—Ask me no more—pity me, and let me be gone.

Prim. (*half crying.*) 'Tis all over—I see 'tis all over.—Farewell !

Mrs. B. Farewell ! and, for the service you have rendered me, my gratitude shall only die with me—(*Going, she returns and kisses his hand.*)—Oh ! I did hope you would have proved a father to me.

Prim. Did you ? (*weeps.*) My poor daughter hoped the same—but I deserted her. I

—go ; since you won't communicate, I entreat you go : for pity's sake, don't let us be bidding farewell all night.—(*Takes out a purse, and puts it in her hand.*) There, you know where to apply when you want more ; you understand me ; whilst I have a guinea, you shall never want a part of it.

Mrs. B. Bless you ! bless you, Sir !—But I forgot ; I have left some drawings and manuscripts in the next room, may I venture to return for them ?

Prim. You may : but if you see me when you come back, don't speak to me ; we've had enough of leave-taking—damn it ! another farewell would choak me.—[*Exit MRS. BELFORD.*]
—Poor soul ! I hope tis no crime to pity her.—And, spite of the chaste society of the Cottage, I've a great mind to call her back, and—no, no, I mustn't risk defiling so spotless and immaculate a scene.—Heigho ! I'll sit down and compose myself.—(*Looks round.*)—Ay, ay, in that chair I may rest unseen by her while she passes.—(*Pointing to the chair near the flat.*)—Yes, here I may be quiet.—(*Sits in it.*)—And if I can but sleep and forget her.—Poor soul ! she hoped I might have proved a father to her.—Poor soul !—(*falls back and dozes.*)

(*SIR HARRY opens door, which is exactly behind the chair, but don't push it far enough to hit the chair.*)

Sir. H. (*peeping out.*) No Mrs. Gabriel yet—surely I heard somebody—soft, I'll peep further.—(*Pushes the door further open, and hits against the back of the chair.*)—Not a soul. Damn me ! I'll bear it no longer.—(*Bangs open the*

door, and it hits violently against the back of the chair.)—PRIMITIVE jumps out, and, unseen by SIR HARRY, gets behind the door to watch.)—Rather than be left alone, and endure this tedium, this inanity, I'll plunge into any society.—(As he is going)—

Enter MRS. LACKBRAIN hastily.

Mrs. L. O, my dear Sir Harry! I've run myself out of breath; and I'm so frightened, and so faint—so—I shall be able to speak in a moment—there.

Sir H. What's the matter?

Mrs. L. Why, Gabriel was the person at the paddock-gate; knows I've an assignation in that dressing-room: he's coming here to search; and if you're discovered, he'll find out that you were his assailant, and instantly fight you.

(PRIMITIVE watching all the time.)

Sir. H. Well, let him: damme! employment is the very thing I wanted.

Mrs. L. Nay, think of my reputation—my hopes with Mr. Primitive.—And, look! see what a tremendous cudgel he wields over his head.

Sir. H. Gad! so he does; and that may produce more employment than is necessary: and since I am unarmed, and your reputation is in danger, I tell you what—I was before going; and, if you'll promise to befriend Marchmont, I'll fly so fast that time itself han't overtake me.

[Exit.]

GABRIEL, *singing and shaking cudgel.*

Mrs. L. So, Sir, you think I've a lover here ? but it's all a falshood, Sir : and I should like to know if this is a return for securing Mr. Primitive's fortune, by my scandalizing this Mrs. Belford ?

Prim. (*looking over door.*) Scandalize her !

Gabr. You secured ! why 'twas I—'twas the sweet child of nature that—

Mrs. L. Don't tell me, Sir ; I say it was my doing.

Gabr. And I say it was mine ; wasn't it my servant that made him believe cards of invitation signs of domestic comfort ; being up all night, a proof of early rising ? and didn't I convince old Hurlo-Thumbo that reeling was rural awkwardness ; and the flush of claret, the rosy hue of health ?—But enough of old Hurlo-Thumbo !

Prim. Hurlo-Thumbo.

Gabr. Now for the dressing-room.

Mrs. L. O, pray do, Sir, pray search the dressing-room.

Gabr. I will ; and Jemmy Swagger shall be nothing to it.—But first I'll lock the door, and then go bring cousin baronet to see me perform such an operation—(*Locks the door, leaving PRIMITIVE standing up in the chair ; who taps him on the head.*—GABRIEL turns round ; and they meet face to face.)

Enter MRS. BELFORD.

Prim. Your servant, rural innocence !—
your most obedient, connubial love !

Gabr. What ! is it you uncle ?

Prim. Yes, it's old Hurlo-Thumbo .—For you, wronged, injured lady, (*to* MRS. B.) without prying further into your history, henceforth accept those favours I designed for them ; henceforth let me be a father to you. —And, d'ye hear, Sir ? (*to* GABR.) if you expect to profit by my future bounty, retire —retire, and repent.

Gabr. Well, we'll go, uncle.—And I begin to think I shall repent ; for I'm still so much a child of nature as to feel sorry for my behaviour to that lady ; I am indeed ; for though my education has made me a fool, I think I'm not quite a knave : though my head is wrong my heart is right ; and I dare say, when we're all sober, we shall still be friends. *Exeunt* GABR. and MRS. L.

Prim. Psha ! away with you !—Odsheart ! town manners are to me unbearable, even in their proper sphere ; but brought into the country ; introduced into the calm, sequestered vale !—Though I hope and trust the case is singular ; and that the English cottage is and ever will be, the seat of peace, industry, and virtue. *[Exit with* MRS. B.

ACT V.

SCENE—*The Inside of CRAFTLY'S Library, filled with Toys, Jewellery, &c. as Libraries are at Watering places—a Raffleing Table in the Centre.*

Enter SIR HARRY from Door in Flat.

Sir H. So—'tis as poor Rosa expected. Craftly has the appointment of the new steward, and her father is again at his mercy. What's to be done? There is no way but to expose him to Mr. Primitive. Gad, I'll try hard for it—I don't mind trouble. That (*snap-ping his fingers*) for content, and the placid streams of life! give me love and a little agreeable hot-water.

Enter PRIMITIVE and Mrs. BELFORD.

Mrs. B. Alas! that is his situation—a distressed author. By his pen he earns a scanty pittance for himself and daughter; and for her sake I thus presume to recommend him to the stewardship.

Sir H. (advancing to Prim.) And I pre-

sume to back that recommendation? The gentleman at the Priory is a worthy man.

Prim. Why, that's true—and I certainly am much indebted to you for bumping me out of that chair, and I can't bear to deny my dear adopted any thing. But you should consider, my worthy friend, Craftly is the only person who, from his experience, can select a proper steward for me; and, therefore, he must have the nomination.—Nay, I am peremptory, Sir.—And now (*to Mrs. BELFORD*) let me congratulate you on your arrival from the dens of Arcadia at the seat of learning and rationality.

Sir H. Learning and rationality.

Prim. To be sure, Sir. What, with the works of deceased authors, and the society of living ones, I know no place more amusing and instructing than the house of a respectable bookseller—and such a one is Craftly! But let me look about me (*puts on his spectacles*). I'm told he has made great improvements since I went abroad. Bless me, what a noble room! And here (*going towards the counters*), what's here? Children's riding horses, cricket bats, powder, pomatum, candle-sticks, and tea-pots! Psha! we've made a mistake, come along—this is a toy-shop—this can't be a library.

Sir H. Not a library! ha! ha!—that's good!—What, I suppose you thought Craftly dealt in books?

Prim. To be sure. What else should he deal in.

Sir H. What? Why, in raffling.

Prim. Now, what the devil is raffling?

Sir H. Ha! ha! ha! He don't know what

raffling is (*goes up to the table*). Look, look at this gaming-table. Behold this dice-box. Here! here's the seat of learning and rationality (*throws dice*).

Prim. Heaven defend me! And you call this raffling, do you?

Sir H. Yes; and trifling and insignificant as the sport may appear, I know no species of gaming more fatal or pernicious. Mrs. Lackbrain is at once an instance. She told me herself, that when only nine years old, Mr. Craftly persuaded her mother to let pretty Miss throw for a pocket-book.—She grasp'd the dice-box in her little hand, and being successful, her passion for play became so uncontrollable, that she was never easy till she lost every shilling of her fortune.

Prim. I won't believe a word on't.—He is too honourable—too prudent.

Sir H. Won't you? then bet me a hundred pounds, and he shall confess it to your face.

Prim. I bet—I commit the very crime!—

Sir H. Nay, then humour me so far as to say 'tis a bet. See! here he comes—and to secure his confession, say you have betted that raffling is a more productive trade than bookselling. Come now—do—to indulge me.

Prim. Well, in order to convince you of your error, I will humour you.

Enter CRAFTLY.

Cousin, I rejoice to see you; but before I say a word on other subjects, you must decide a

wager between me and this gentleman. Ha! ha! What do you think? I have laid a hundred pounds that you get more money by raffling than bookselling.

Craft. Indeed! and has he taken the bet?

Sir H. I have—and be cautious—a hundred pounds is an object to a poor Baronet; and remember, I am on the side of book-selling.

Prim. And I on raffling, and I'm most anxious to win.

Sir H. And so am I.

Craft. You are, are you! Then, in addition to gratifying the old gentleman, I'll work you for the furniture (*aside.*) Joy, Cousin! the wager's yours! I know no more of books than he or any other man of fashion does. So, I say (*aside to Sir HARRY.*) who'll peep through the iron bars first, now?

Sir H. Psha! I'll have stronger demonstration—prove it—prove it, Sir.

Prim. Aye, prove it, Sir.

Craft. (*elbowing PRIM. and winking.*) Don't be afraid—I'll satisfy him (*takes out a paper.*) Look here now—here are twelve names to raffle for that silver tea caddee at half a guinea a-piece.

Sir H. Well, where's your profit? It costs you six guineas.

Craft. No, it don't—it only costs me three—so there you see (*elbowing PRIM. again.*)—'Tis two to one in our favour already; ha! ha!

[*PRIMITIVE tries to laugh with him, but cannot.*]

Sir H. Ay: but another thing—All the names are not paid for.

Craft. I know—Mr. Wilkins isn't paid for—and why? Because I'm Mr. Wilkins.

Prim. You Mr. Wilkins?

Craft. To be sure. The highest throw, you see, wins the prize, and the filling a raffle is the work of time.—Then one comes—throws “thirty-five,” and goes to town—another “forty,” and follows—another “forty-five,” and he goes too. Very well! Then, I'm to inform them by letter who's the winner—then, of course, you know I'm the winner, for I throw “forty-seven,” and write word, Mr. Wilkins has won the caddee. There—now—now are you satisfied, or will you hear more, simpleton? ha! ha! ha! (*laughing and still elbowing PRIM.*)

Sir H. No—I'm quite satisfied—ar'n't you, Mr. Primitive?

Prim. Quite—I never was more satisfied in all my life, ha! ha! ha! And, as I don't wish to be raffled out of my property; take notice, that instead of accepting a person of your nomination, I appoint the gentleman at the Priory sole steward of all my estate.

Craft. Hem! appoint him steward?

Sir H. Ay; would you have him appoint Mr. Wilkins?

Prim. Yes: would you have me appoint Mr. Wilkins?

Sir H. I say, who'll peep through the iron bars first now?

Prim. But come—let us go instantly, and acquaint your friend with his appointment.

Craft. Nay, cousin, but hear me, upon my word I meant no harm—I thought all was fair in gaming.

Prim. More shame for you—And thank Heaven, I'm too old fashioned to countenance such practices! so preferring the distressed author to the raffling bookseller, I take my leave of you and Mr. Wilkins forever.

[*Exit with Mrs. BELFORD.*

Sir H. And pray, Sir, make my best respects to Mrs. Wilkins; and take my advice, improve young minds by the sale of good moral publications, instead of corrupting them in the worst manner—by initiating them to all the horrors of the gaming table

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE—*A wood.*

Enter ROSA.

Rosa. Where, where can my father have wandered? I tremble every moment for his safety—for alas! we are again in the power of our persecutor; and already, perhaps, he has fallen a victim to his malice—and yet there is one hope; the kind the generous Sir Harry Torpid promised he would see Mr. Primitive.

Enter SIR HARRY TORPID.

Sir H. And he has seen him, and its all settled—no more fudging, copying, and composing now :—No—instead of daughter to

a poor poet, you are heiress to a gentleman of three hundred a-year.

Rosa. Nay, no tantalizing—But tell me, who is the new steward?

Sir H. Who? Why, your father! Aye, things are as they ought to be. Mr. Marchmont is steward to Mr. Primitive's estates, and Craftly and his dice-boxes, will be sent to the round-house—But don't suppose you have to thank me—Here comes your benefactress.

Enter MRS. BELFORD.

Rosa. Heavens! to her!—The very person I so longed to see—Welcome—welcome!

Mrs. B. (*taking her hand and kissing it*). Do I again behold you?—Pardon me; but I have thought of nothing else since I first saw you.

Sir H. No more have I—that's my case exactly—and for the service you have rendered—

Mrs. B. What I have done has been for your sake, *Rosa*. We are compelled by strong and cruel circumstances (ay, Heaven has so decreed it (to live forever separate.—And had I left you in distress—but now the dread of poverty is past—and that thought, perhaps, will cheer me in my hours of absence—perhaps may make the loss of you supportable.

Rosa. The loss of me!—what, now, when you've so served, and so attached me, will you leave me?

Mrs. B. Ay, for ever.—Ask me not why, sweet girl! tempt me not to unfold a mystery that will plant thorns in your breast, and expose—no, never, never can the mystery be solved.

Rosa. Nay, but we will not separate.—And, look! yonder's my father; I'll call him to thank you (*going*).

Mrs. B. (*holding her*). Not for your life! not for your life!

Rosa. Nay, do not deny me; let me administer relief to one who stands so much in need of it.

Mrs. B. Mark! what picture's that, he so intently gazes on?

Rosa. I know not: but 'tis connected with his secret grief; for oft, when he conceived himself unseen, I have observed him press it to his lips, till he dissolved in tears.—And look again!—see now how he devours it with his kisses!

Mrs. B. Maddening sight!—I know too well who it resembles.—Oh, villain! villain!

Rosa. Villain!

Mrs. B. Yes; I have too long spared him; too long in pity smother'd the dark tale.—But now 'tis open enmity—avowed defiance—and he shall feel an injured woman's vengeance.

Sir H. How!

Rosa. Amazement!

Mrs. B. Instantly conduct me to him; and tell him, she who conferred an accidental service entreats no recompense but this: tell him, last night I whiled away my hours in composition of an artless tale; and as an author of superior fame, I come to him for censure or for praise.—(*Producing the manuscript.*)

—Give it,—’twill interest—’twill instruct—oh yes, ’twill strike him to the heart.

Sir H. Gad! I’m frightened out of my senses. I hope you’ll let me join the party; for, upon my soul there’s no staying alone under such mysterious circumstances.

Mrs. B. No, Sir; these meetings must be private.—Come, Rosa.—Poor girl! I tremble for you: I see I have alarmed you; and on your account I could again be silent and discreet: but the picture—you saw him press it to his lips—you saw him hide it in his breast—that rouses—fires me!—while I have strength and life, conduct me to him.

[*Exit with Rosa.*]

Sir H. And what is to become of me?—Whilst I have life and strength I’ll conduct myself to Mr. Primitive, and we’ll return and overhear all that passes. And now I ought to be on the pinnacle of happiness, for I am so choaked with agitation—but, however, I see a man may have too much of a good thing.

[*Exit.*]

SCENE—*An Apartment in the Priory; painted Windows; a Gothic Table, and three Chairs.*

Enter MARCHMONT and ROSA.—(*Rosa has the manuscript in her hand*).

March. Astonishing!—Raised to prosperity by one I so neglected, and ask no recompence but the revision of a manuscript!—’Slife, ’tis

H

incredible: and remember, Rosa, we have already had reason to suspect her; and therefore, till I know the motive for her generosity, I shall not condescend to profit by it.

Rosa. What! won't you see her? will you again dismiss her?

March. Unthinking girl! why, wherefore should she serve me?—You are yourself, perhaps, the bribe: and shall I owe preferment to my daughter's shame?—No, she shall not enter.—And yet, if after all her motive should be good; if, to the only one who has stepped forth to serve me, I prove suspicious and ungrateful—that must not be—give me the manuscript, and conduct her in.

Rosa. Here, here it is, Sir, (*giving it.*)—And recollect, these are but the heads, the outlines of the book; and you are to decide, whether the materials are sufficient to ground a work upon.—And now look, Sir, (*goes to the wing, and leads on Mrs. BELFORD with her veil down,*) here is our benefactress.

March. Madam, after what passed when last I saw you, I scarce know how to address you.—Pray be seated.—

ROSA draws a chair; Mrs. BELFORD sits.

I'm told you have conferred an everlasting favour on me; and, as a recompense, you only ask what is most flattering to an author's pride.—I shall not trouble you with thanks, but will proceed.—(*Seats himself; Rosa sits by Mrs. BELFORD, —Reads*) "Sketch of a Romance,"

“ to be called Henry and Eliza.—Eliza, against the consent of a parent as fond as affluent, married Henry.—Two years soon passed in harmony and joy, and Heaven blessed them with a pledge of mutual love. —The third began with *poverty* and *sorrow* ; and to preserve her child and husband from distress, Eliza appealed to the feelings of her enraged father ; who, in compassion to her sufferings, supplied her with a remittance, as the last token of parental love.”—
(*Pauses and weeps.*)

Rosa. (*rises.*) Go on, Sir : I feel as much interested as yourself : pray go on.

March. (*reading.*) “ Henry, though possessed of honor and of talent, could not resist temptation : and allured to the gaming-table by the arts of a female seducer, lost the remittance, sacrificed the sole maintenance of his family, and left Eliza to the mercy of his creditors,”—(*Rises and goes forward.*)—“ The house, and poor remains of their effects, were taken from her ; and when she sought the husband of her heart, he was not to be found.—Lost in the vortex of dissipation, he had forgot the wife he once adored ; and revelling in luxury and guilt, thought not that Eliza was destitute and forsaken.”——Oh, horror ! horror !—(*Drops the book.*)—Speak ! who are you ? whence came you ?

MARCHMONT, whilst reading the above, is much agitated, pauses often, and trembles violently. Mrs. BELFORD also is much agitated; apparently gazing intently on MARCHMONT, half rising from her chair, &c. ROSA observes them both with astonishment, and occasionally bursts into tears.

Rosa. (*taking up the book and presenting it to MARCHMONT.*) Proceed; for pity's sake proceed—nay, you must, you shall.

March. Oh! I cannot.

Rosa. (*reads.*) “Eliza thus reduced, thus
“deserted both by parent and husband, no
“longer could maintain the only comfort that
“was left her.—Distress soon tore her from
“her child: she placed it under the protec-
“tion of a relation of its father; and, to sup-
“port herself, she changed her name; and,
“in a state of menial service, went to Switzer-
“land.—There, woe-worn and forlorn, rob-
“bed of all hope, a prey to anguish and des-
“pair——”

March. Distraction! madness!—I know the rest—(*snatching the book from ROSA, and advancing towards MRS. B.*)—she died—died of a broken heart.

Mrs. B. (*who has before risen from her seat, throws up her veil.*) No, she lives.—Behold me, Marchmont, after an absence of twelve cheerless years—behold that once loved wife, who would have begged, starved, perished with you.—(MARCH. staggers and faints in a chair.)

Rosa. My mother! (*runs and embraces her*)

Mrs. B. The story of my death was but an artifice to save me from enquiry ; and now I came, incensed with wrongs, to goad you to the soul with my reproaches ; but the remembrance of our former love, that altered look, that worn, exhausted frame—Poor Marchmont ! I may avoid, but I cannot upbraid him.—Farewell!—(*going, Rosa holds her.*)

March. O my torn heart!—(*in turning in the chair, the picture is discovered hanging from his neck.*)

Rosa. Look, look, my mother !—Is he not now an object of compassion ?

Mrs. B. He is.—But see ! he wears a basilisk to strike me dead—the picture, Rosa.

Rosa. Nay, but for my sake, mother : though as a husband guilty, he has been the best of fathers ; and since this hated object is the bar, I will remove—(*takes the picture.*)—How ! that—look—those eyes—merciful powers ! it is the portrait of my mother !

Mrs. B. Can it—(*trembling, and looking at it*)—yes, mine is the picture he devours with kisses—mine the resemblance that he bathes with tears !

MARCHMONT, suddenly recovering and pulling ROSA forward, without seeing MRS.

MARCHMONT.

March. (*risés*) She's gone !—fly—follow—call her back : tell her, I am not so guilty as she thinks me ; for, as I hope for happiness to come, my heart was ever only hers ; and though involved in blackest dissipation my truth and constancy were yet untainted : tell her besides—

Rosa. Look, father !

March. Ah ! do I once more—my child, fall prostrate at her feet ; entreat, implore forgiveness.—(*They both kneel.*)—My wife !

Rosa. My mother ! can you pronounce a pardon ?

Mrs. M. I would, but tears prevent me.—(*gets between them, and embraces them both.*)—Merciful heaven ! receive a suppliant's thanks ; for thus encircled by my child and husband, what now is wanting,

Enter PRIMITIVE and SIR HARRY TORPID.

Prim. What ? why a father—and here he is.—That father who deserted you—who adopted you—who—hang it ! why don't you speak, Sir Harry ? you see my tongue sticks to my mouth.

Sir H. Who took the name of Primitive for an estate of two hundred thousand pounds—who will share it with you ; raise you from poverty and sorrow to joy and affluence, to—damn it ? I copy your example ; my tongue sticks to my mouth too.

Mrs. M. Heavens ! in my benefactor do I behold a parent !

Prim. You do ; and but for the cursed circumstance of changing names, we should have known each other long ago.—But now I hold you to my heart.—You also, my little grand-daughter—zooks ! I must give you a kiss for your likeness to your mother. (*kisses her.*)

Sir H. So must I (*kisses her*).—I beg pardon, but I always copy Mr. Primitive.

Prim. For you, Mr. Marchmont, I was once coming forward to throttle you ; but when I recollected I deserved the same punishment, I pitied and forgave you. Henceforth I'll be a friend to you, a father to your wife, a grandfather to your daughter—and what's more, with your leave, I'll be a grandfather to Sir Harry.

Sir H. Ay do ; pray let me be one of the family : I've long had a predilection for matrimony ; and, from what we've just witnessed, I'm sure it will produce agitation in abundance.

March. Then, Sir, if I'm to be consulted, I can only say, you saved me once from ruin, and I know no man that so well deserves my daughter.

Prim. So he did me ; and I know no man that so well deserves my grand-daughter.—And now, what does she say ?

Rosa. That to deserve him, who has so served you and my dearest father, will be the future study of my life.

Sir H. (*taking her hand and kissing it.*) Then, thus I seal the bargain—and now, I only beg one thing—after marriage don't let us be too happy—you must now and then differ with me to keep me alive, for there is only one place in which I dread a difference,—and that is here,

You who can save, or kill us with a breath,
Stamp our existence, don't put life to death
Impatient now we wait your dread command
So let us live, for *Life* is in your hands

THE END.

EPILOGUE.

*Written by JAMES COBB, Esq. and spoken in the
character of PRIMITIVE.*



ALL things are chang'd since I was last in town,
And all that's in it seems turn'd upside down,
Farewell the flowing wig, the snuff-box, cane,
Emblems of wisdom! ye no longer reign!
Where'er I go, I've some new cause for wonder,
And what's still worse, each hour begets a blunder.
'Twas but last week as travelling to town,
Meaning to give the post-boy half a crown,
The Inn being full, all riot, noise and pother,
And really one shock-head's so like another,
I, chancing near Lord Dashaway to stand,
Whipt my half-crown into his Lordship's hand.
His gig he call'd for, dar'd me to deride him;
Then whirl'd away, his servant close beside him;
And there again, ye moderns, I reproach ye,
Once Coachy drove, the Master now drives Coachy.
Courtiers and Citizens, Law, Physic, Trade,
Now are disguis'd in general malquerade,
The cropping system over all prevails,
And horses, like their masters, dock their tails.
They are unskirted—flaps—the waistcoats loose,
Boots cut down, are but high quarter'd shoe
In the streets; this fashion too refines,
And keepers have taken down their signs.

EPILOGUE.

Nought else, indeed, comes down but these devices;
For tho' they lower their signs, they raise their prices.
O Tempora! O Mores! men and shops,
Horses, boots, coats, and waistcoats—all are crops.
Fashion has times and seasons alter'd quite;
At dinner-time they breakfast, dine at night.
And—if they can contrive to rise so soon,
A morning's ride, take in the afternoon.
Our beaux and belles, November's fogs deride;
Enjoy cold weather by the water side;
And then, in Spring, to town return together;
To pass, what they call winter, in warm weather.
To other scenes shall Primitive retire;
There while I chat, around my social fire;
Tho' oft' o'er Fashion's world shall fancy range,
One object claims regard, that knows no change;
Envy must own, true to a Briton's name,
That English Heart of Oak, remains the same.

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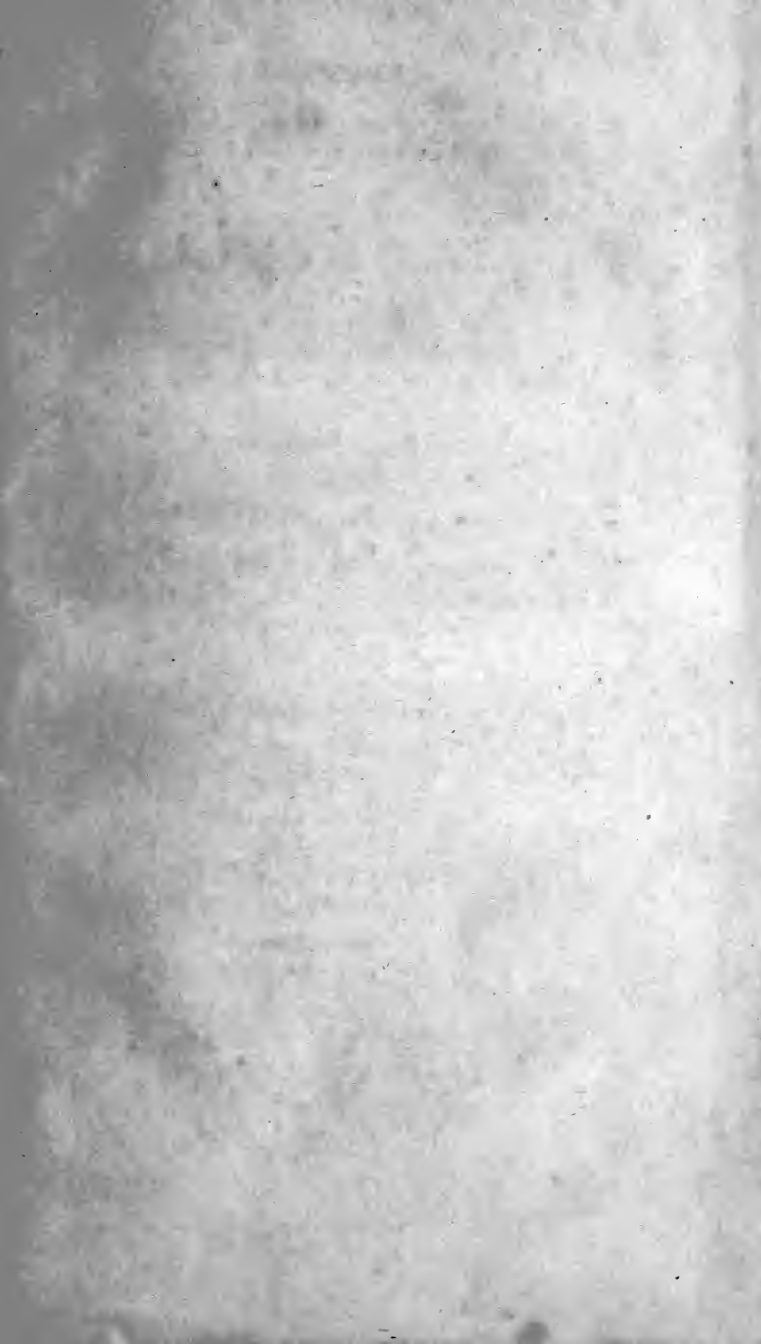


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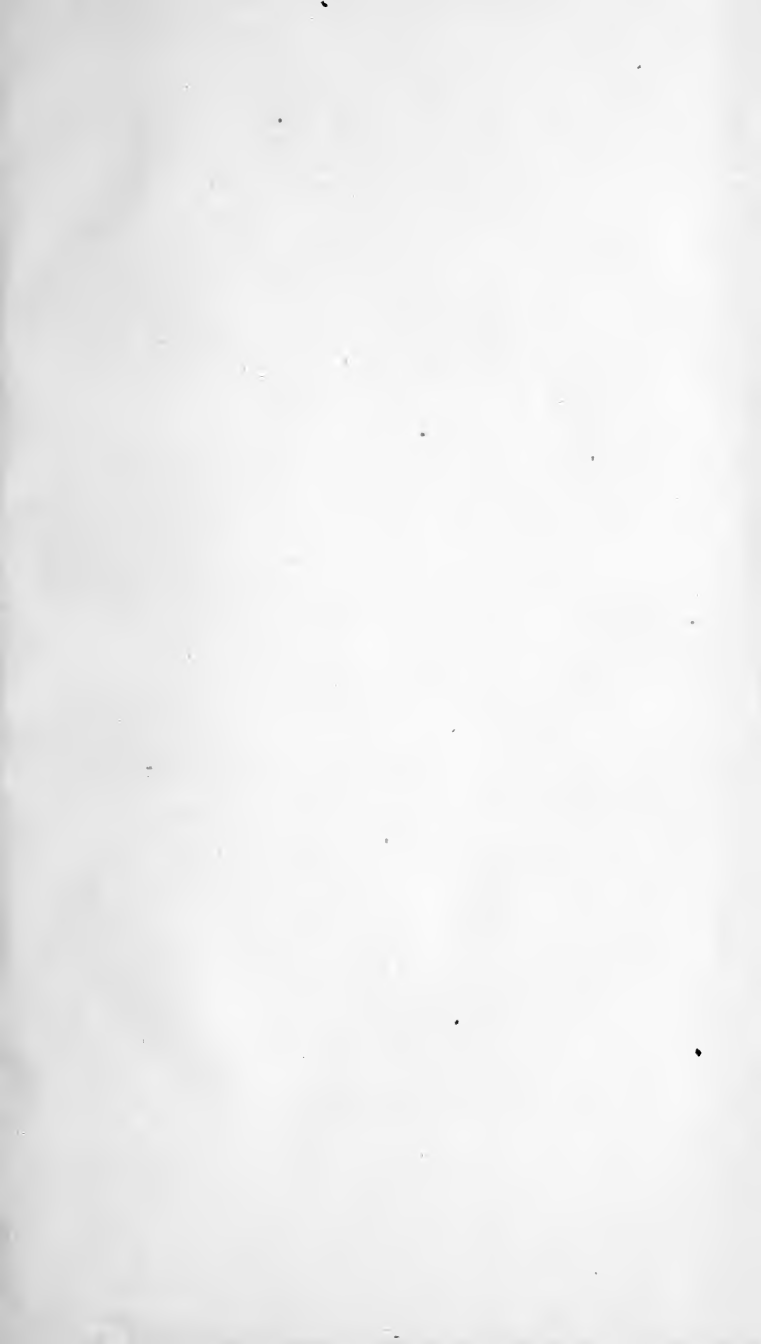
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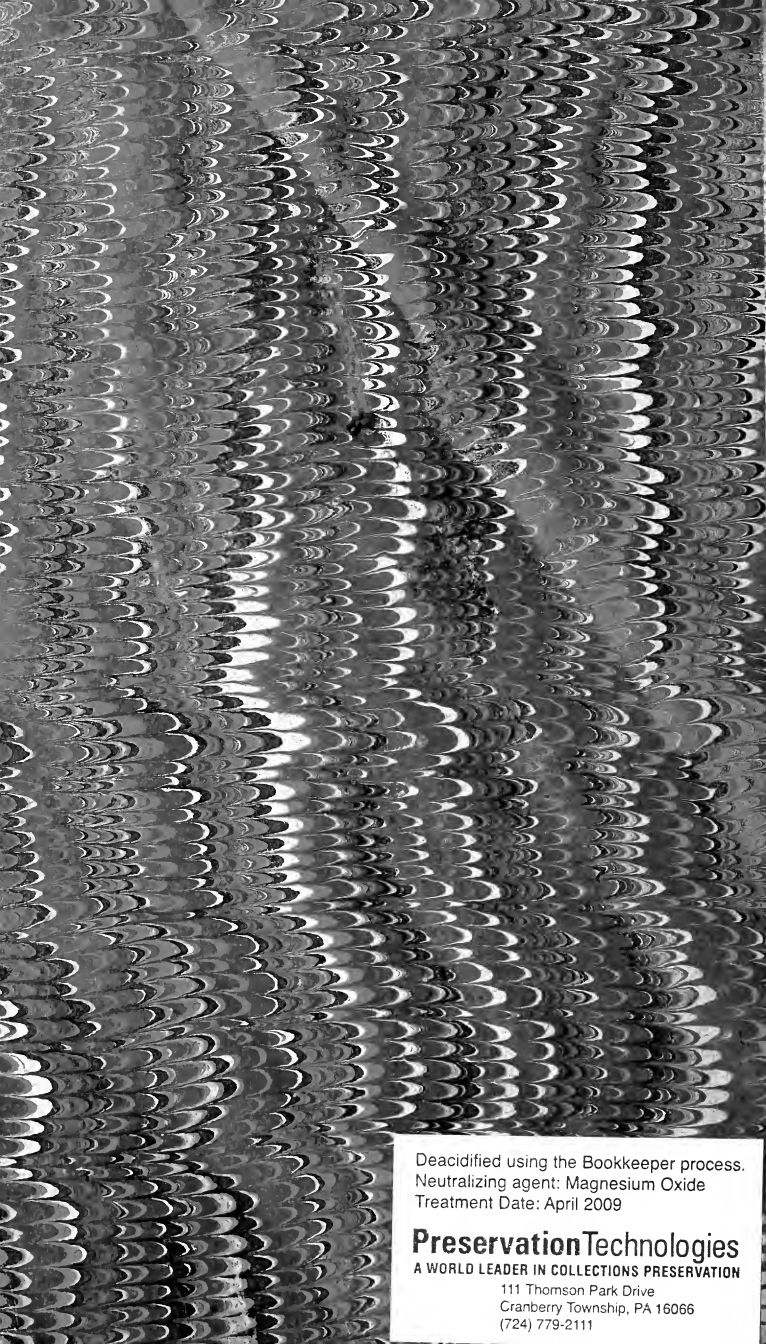








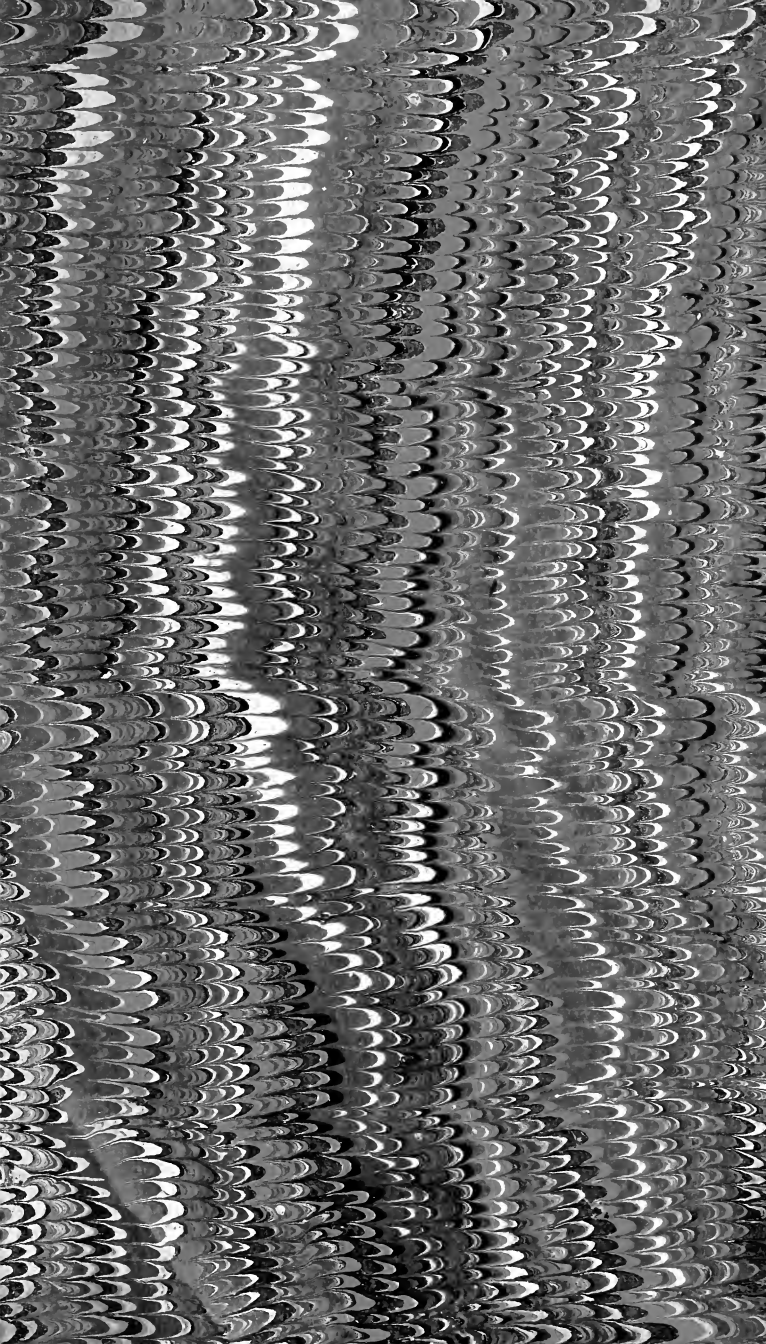




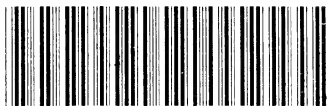
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